LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BHUTANESE FORMER REFUGEE YOUTH: COPING, RESILIENCE AND MINDFULNESS INFUSED COUNSELLING

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Acknowledgements

"Silent gratitude isn't very much to anyone."

- *Gertrude Stein*

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Atra du evarínya ono varda, *(May the stars watch over you)*

Atra esterní ono thelduin, *(May good fortune rule over you)*

Atra guliä un ilian tauthr ono un atra ono waíse sköliro fra rauthr *(May luck and Happiness follow you and may you be shielded from misfortune)*

- *From the inheritance cycle*

Dedication

Thank you God, for your Love so Divine,
Thank you God, for the gift of parents like mine,
In your mercy, look down from above
And grant my dear parents the gift of your love.

And grant my parents the insight to see,
That their love means more than this world to me

- *Helen Steiner Rice*

I dedicate my thesis to my Mama and Daddy. Had it not been for their love and belief in me this PhD would have been but a dream.

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Kia hora te marino,
Kia whakapapa pounamu te moana,
Kia tere te karohirohi.

Ma Io koutou e manaaki, e tiaki, i nga wa katoa.

May the seas be calm,
May the shimmer of summer
Glisten like the greenstone,
*Dance across thy pathway***.**

May your God bless you and protect you for all time.

Abstract

This thesis explores the lived experiences of a group of young Bhutanese former refugees between the ages of 18 to 24 years who were resettled in Christchurch between 2008 and 2010 – prior to the first major earthquake. The main goal of the thesis was to gain an understanding of their ways of coping and a second goal was to explore whether their participation in up to five mindfulness infused counselling sessions had influenced their ways of coping.

A qualitative research methodology was used to guide the thesis. Participants were interviewed about the major events in their life and how they coped with them. They were then invited to participate in five sessions of mindfulness infused counselling. Approximately five weeks after their final session had ended they were invited to one final interview to explore the influence of the sessions on their ways of coping.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed and research notes were taken of the mindfulness infused counselling sessions. Max van Manen's method of phenomenology was adopted to interpret the narratives of the youth. Three main themes emerged from the data analysis and these are described as essences of lived coping experiences. The first captures their strong sense of community back in the refugee camp. The second presents the sense of resilience that exists among the Bhutanese former refugees. The third essence indicated the inner strengths of the participants which they said helped them deal with the challenging circumstances that life cast in their direction. This meant that their first experience of an earthquake was not considered the biggest event in their lives.

After attending the mindfulness infused counselling sessions' participants reported positive benefits from giving non-judgemental attention to their thoughts and feelings and they found themselves dealing with their issues proactively. For some participants their 'accepting' attitude facilitated better control over their emotions while others reported being able to form deeper connections with nature and other people as a result of being mindful. Other participants reported being able to make peace with the events in their past and even found that they were able to forgive those who tormented their community. However, in the absence of any major event in any of the participants' lives

in the time period following their final counselling session, the research was not able to definitely conclude that using mindful-based counselling facilitates better coping in the face extremely stressful events.

There is currently very little research that focuses on the experiences of former refugee youth within New Zealand and how they utilize their capacities to deal with adversities. When this thesis commenced, the Bhutanese were the newest refugee community to be accepted for resettlement in New Zealand. This research partly addresses the limited voice of this community.

List of Abbreviations

AHURA - Association of Human Rights Activists

BAC – British Association for Counselling

CRC – Canterbury Refugee Council

MBI – Mindfulness Based Intervention

NZAC – New Zealand Association of Counsellors

RQB – Refugee Quota Branch

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UPR – Unconditional Positive Regard

Chapter One

Introducing the research and the researcher

The goal of this chapter is to introduce my research topic and the rationale behind why I chose to undertake this research. I will also briefly present my personal experiences with the phenomena I am studying. This is an essential part of a thesis because as Wolcott (2016) highlights –

"Our readers have a right to know about us. They do not want to know whether we played in the high school band. They want to know what prompts our interest in the topics we investigate, to whom we are reporting and what we personally stand to gain from our study (p 36)"

I acknowledge that it is not completely possible to separate my previous experiences from this research and this has the potential to create some personal bias – particularly in qualitative research. I cannot completely set aside my personal and professional experiences that have invariably shaped how I view the world and helped inform the approach I adopted towards my study. But it is also important to acknowledge that I am not doing this research to elevate my voice but the voices of my participants and thus I constantly have to keep my experiences 'bracketed' (Creswell, 2013). One way of doing this is to describe my experiences with the elements I have chosen in my research early in the research (Moustakas, 1994), which I have done in the following section.

Bracketing my Assumptions

"The problem with phenomenological inquiry is not always that we know too little about the phenomenon we wish to investigate, but that we know too much"

Max van Manen in Researching Lived Experience (1990 p 46)

I begin this section with a quote by Max van Manen who stated that our "common sense" pre-understandings, suppositions, assumptions and the existing bodies

of scientific knowledge predispose us to interpret the nature of the phenomenon before we have even come to grips with the significance of the phenomenological question (van Manen, 1990). In this section I will describe my experience with mindfulness, counselling, immigration and my work with youth. This is an important step towards my phenomenological study as by describing their own experiences with the phenomenon being studied the researcher is attempting to set aside their assumptions and prior knowledge so that the focus can be directed to what the participants have said (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas 1994; Stevick 1971; Colaizzi 1973; Keen, 1975).

My journey with counselling and psychotherapy began when I was studying towards my master's degree in India where I studied psychotherapies as one component of my degree in clinical psychology. I immediately liked Carl Rogers' theories of client-centred counselling and was particularly influenced by one of his quotes –

"If I can listen to what he can tell me, if I can understand how it seems to him; if I can see its personal meaning for him, if I can sense the emotional flavour which it has for him, then I will be releasing potent forces of change in him"

- *Carl Rogers*

At this stage I began reading more about humanistic psychology and client-centred counselling. I also undertook training with a non-profit suicide prevention organization that practiced the tenets of client-centred counselling with people who were suicidal and/or in psychological distress. This was the first time that I had the chance to witness Roger's theory 'in action' and this increased my interest in this theory. In this organization I was also exposed to the practice of mindfulness which they taught all their volunteers in addition to client centred theories. I was deeply intrigued by the outcomes of Mindfulness Based person-centred counselling after this. Shortly after I completed my degree I took up a job as a student mentor and counsellor for international postgraduate students and simultaneously undertook further training in counselling.

Although my role was to oversee the pastoral needs of the international students, some local students began seeking my counsel – since there was no counsellor appointed for them. In the years that I was involved with counselling youth the thing that struck me the most was that these young men and women were not looking for advice nor were they looking for sympathy, they were just seeking to be heard without being judged. Most of the time all I was required to do was create a safe and trusting

atmosphere where they could give voice to their concerns and my role was just to be present and be an attentive and caring listener, which was consistent with my humanistic oriented training and practice. The end result was almost always a client who felt understood, valued, worthy and capable of facing whatever life circumstance they had brought in as a complaint.

Somewhere along the way I began integrating my mindfulness training into my counselling practice. One of my trainers had taught us that

"Just as a book requires margins so that the text is easy to follow and not a strain on the eyes so, also, a few minutes of mindfulness serve as blank spaces in our lives so that we can pass on from one activity to the other with a graceful step."

- *Personal conversation, 2012*

This started resonating with my clients and I started getting positive feedback about the use of mindfulness within my sessions. Apart from its spiritual benefits of 'quietening the mind' and 'getting in touch with our inner self' another benefit (that I saw) was the simplicity and straightforwardness of this technique. It can be taught to people from almost any age group and can be practiced at any time without the need for any special equipment or garments.

Two issues bothered me a great deal as a practicing counsellor. The first was the notion which most of the young people believed that counselling was a 'treatment' for the mentally unsound. This made me realise that one of the factors that hinders the youth from accessing counselling services is the stigma that is attached to it. The second issue was that there was a lack of relevant literature on how young people respond to counselling. In particular I was interested in literature pertaining to people in the age group of 18 to 25 years (this was the predominant age group with which I worked). Most of the therapeutic techniques relied on evidence supplied from older adults and these were then just extended downwards to youth. I knew from experience that what works with adults does not always work with youth.

Another personal experience that I find the need to declare in this section is my status of being an immigrant. I should acknowledge at the outset that unlike my participants, I am not a forced immigrant and my journey to New Zealand was not one of flight, trauma and the fear of not seeing my hometown again. However, like my

participants I also have flown across the Pacific Ocean leaving my roots behind. It took many months for me to get accustomed to the changes in the environment, particularly the frequent 'mood swings' of the weather and the stark differences in the food culture. I am not from the same country as the participants, but I am from the neighbouring country and we share parts of our culture and even speak a common language (Hindi) so it is my assumption that I would be able to relate, at least to some degree, to some parts of their stories.

Lofland and Lofland (2006) suggest that researchers should start where they are and use their current situation and past experience as a topic of research. Van Manen (1990) suggests that researchers should start their research with what they find interesting and consider their 'orientation to the lifeworld'. This above section highlights and allows me to bracket the areas I am passionate about and how they have contributed to my interest in this particular topic.

I also at this time acknowledge that 'bracketing' for me, as a researcher will have to continue throughout the research process so that I always have a space to record my own experiences. I will achieve this mainly through keeping a research diary and constant discussion with my research supervisors.

Positionality and motivations for the present study

For the reasons described above, when I entered my doctoral program I was sure that I wanted to do a study that incorporated the use of mindfulness in counselling which is referred to in the literature as a Mindfulness Based Intervention (MBI) (e.g. Brown et al, 2013). When I moved to Christchurch and witnessed first-hand the destruction and devastation that had been caused by the Great Canterbury earthquakes I was deeply affected by what I saw. The two major earthquakes occurred on September 4 in 2010 and February 22 in 2011, and over 12,000 aftershocks continued into 2012. On the 4th of September people were woken with a deafening roar and violent shaking of a massive 7.1 magnitude earthquake. The seismic violence was the first of its kind in the history of Christchurch yet it was described by many as a 'miracle earthquake' (Gay, 2010) because no one was killed. Even though many people sustained serious injuries

and many houses were made uninhabitable, the fact that the earthquake struck at 4:53am, when most of the population were asleep, contributed to fewer causalities and people soon assumed a vision of normality and the city grew calmer.

However, this calm proved to be short-lived when six months later as the city was still recovering from the previous earthquake, it was hit by a 6.3 magnitude earthquake on the 22nd of February. This time the earthquake struck at lunchtime on a working day, was shallower and centred closer to the city (Corin, 2011). The effects of this earthquake were far more devastating (even though the magnitude was lower). The rescue efforts resulted in many lives being saved but unfortunately not all. 185 people died from that earthquake and the aftershocks that followed caused widespread damage to properties mainly in the central and eastern suburbs (Osman, 2012). According to the database of the New Zealand police 115 people were killed in the collapse of the Canterbury television building, 18 died in the collapse of PGC house, 8 were killed when masonry fell on their bus and the others were killed at various places across the city centre and suburbs.

I arrived in Christchurch over two years after the major earthquakes and one thing that I observed was that many people still wanted to talk about their experiences of the earthquakes. Since I was still in the process of developing a research proposal, I decided that my thesis would include an offer of mindfulness infused counselling sessions to people who were interested in exploring this option as a way of dealing with their stress from the earthquakes. I was then also faced with the task of choosing which people I wanted to work with for my study. There were some indications that among the people severely affected by the earthquakes were the city's refugee population (Osman, 2012). Many refugee families had lost their homes and had to live in badly damaged houses. In addition to this, the refugee communities were left out of the official quake response and the public safety and health information was not made available to these communities in their native languages (Todd, 2011). Many local people left town to stay with friends and relatives but the resettled refugee communities did not have this resource. Many were able to return to the Mangere centre in Auckland and some shifted to other cities like Dunedin but had to return shortly either due to the need to return to their 'home' or because there was no support available to them at those places (Gates, 2011).

I decided after considering the information on immigrants' responses to the earthquakes that I would study the experiences of people who like me are not from New Zealand, but who have in the last few years made New Zealand their home. While further exploring this option I realised that in my sample group of interest there were two sections of people – those who had chosen to 'immigrate' to New Zealand and those who sought 'refuge' in New Zealand i.e. the immigrants and refugees. I made a choice at this point to go with the latter. This group of people come with unique backgrounds involving mostly torture, physical and emotional abuse, and flight and resettlement anxiety. In addition, my search for literature revealed that there was not much work that focused on experiences of resettled refugees in New Zealand and the few existing studies all indicated that there is a need for further and in-depth studies to be conducted with refugee groups (e.g. Pahud, 2008; Osman, 2012; Marlowe & Lou, 2013). Articles in the local newspapers had indicated that services provided for those belonging to refugee groups after the Canterbury earthquakes had been inadequate and many of the refugee groups were not even aware of the services available. Given the need for in-depth understanding of refugee groups in New Zealand, I decided that the purpose of my study would best be served by qualitative methods.

Being an Asian I decided that it might be beneficial for me to work with people from my side of the continent as they would (presumably) be less resistant to someone they perceive as 'their own' rather than an outsider. At the time I commenced my thesis, there were no people of Indian origin in Christchurch who identified as refugees. For this reason, I chose to work with the Bhutanese refugee community, as this is one of the closest countries to India and there was a reasonable number of Bhutanese who had been resettled in Christchurch. I also chose the youth i.e. people between the ages of 18 to 24 because, as set out in the previous section, this was the age group with which I had experience working.

Another point that I need to set out at this stage is my choice of the term 'former refugee'. As part of becoming informed and extending my knowledge on the refugee communities in New Zealand, I began attending symposiums and conferences relating to resettlement and refugees. Here I found that the resettled youth emphasised the need to be referred to as 'former' refugee youth. This is particularly because they wish to acknowledge that their refugee status (along with the horror and hardships it brought) has ended and they have started new lives in New Zealand. Members of the recently

launched New Zealand National Refugee Youth Council have also advocated this change of term. In keeping with this request and to respect the wishes of this community I decided to refer to my participants as former refugee youth throughout this thesis.

My research questions

When I commenced my research my intention was only to explore the experiences of Bhutanese former refugees before they came to New Zealand and after they had attended some mindfulness-infused counselling sessions which were offered as part of this research. During the process of data analysis, however, it became evident that a prominent theme that was emerging within the narratives was coping strategies. Hence, two additional research questions were included to help give direction to this theme of coping. My final research questions were –

- *What are the lived experiences of the former Bhutanese refugee youths in the refugee camps?*
- *How do the Bhutanese former refugee youths cope with being resettled in Christchurch?*
- *How do the Bhutanese former refugee youths cope with the after-effects of a natural disaster, specifically the Canterbury Earthquakes?*
- *Does undergoing mindfulness-infused counselling influence the ways of coping of the Bhutanese former refugee youth?*

These questions underpinned all the aspects of the research method, methodology and the process of data analysis.

The organisation of this thesis

The **first chapter** introduces the reader to my personal background, my motivation and rationale for carrying out this research. Within this chapter I have also indicated my adherence to a phenomenological research approach and presented my experiences with the phenomena I will be researching.

The **second chapter** presents recent data about refugees and the refugee situation worldwide. In this chapter I have also presented some literature on the background of refugees in New Zealand specifically. This is followed by a section which traces the roots of the ethnic nationalism that took place in Bhutan in the 1980s and resulted in the creation of the refugee status of the 'Lhotshampa's'. This section describes their predicament living in the UNHCR administered camps in Nepal, and briefly presents the background of their resettlement negotiations between the UNHCR and several countries.

The **third chapter** explores literature relevant to the major theories and concepts that were used in this thesis with the aim of providing the reader with the context and background that informed my research. This chapter begins with a presentation and discussion of literature on counselling – particularly the person-centred approach. This is followed by some research data on the use of person-centred counselling and some guidelines to be considered while working with young clients. This section finishes with a discussion of the literature on the practice of psychotherapy with refugee groups.

In the **fourth chapter**, I present my understandings about the overarching methodology that was used for my research. I present the background theory and applications of phenomenology and compare it with other major qualitative methods to demonstrate why phenomenology was chosen as the appropriate methodology for my thesis. I also outline the ethical issues that I grappled with and how these were negotiated. I describe the way I went about finding my participants, the tools I used in collecting my data and the process in which the data were collected. I also present the method in which the mindfulness-infused counselling sessions were conducted. The chapter concludes with a section on the way in which the phenomenological data analysis was conducted.

The **fifth chapter** is the first of the research findings chapters. Within this chapter I present the lived experiences of the participants in a chronological order. The lived accounts begin with textural and structural descriptions of the participants' lives in the camps and then proceeds to their stories of the resettlement process, their arrival in New Zealand and their recollections of their first-ever earthquake experience. In

keeping with phenomenological writing, the final section of this chapter presents the 'essence' of the participants' experiences.

The **sixth chapter** presents the participants' accounts of the mindfulness-infused counselling sessions. The chapter begins with a brief presentation of the counsellor's reflective notes on the sessions, to provide the reader a glimpse of the mindfulness-infused counselling process. Following this, the participants' accounts of any perceived changes to their ways of coping as a result of attending the mindfulness infused sessions are presented. The chapter concludes with an examination of the clients' responses compared to responses of others in relevant literature.

The **seventh and final chapter** brings together the major findings of this thesis and they are discussed in the light of contemporary literature to demonstrate their significance. The strengths and limitations of this thesis are also discussed. This chapter concludes with a discussion on the implications of the thesis findings, and suggestions - which may be addressed by future researchers. The strengths and implications of this thesis highlight the contributions that this research has made to the knowledge-base about former refugee youth, Mindfulness Based Interventions and the coping resources of young refugees.

Chapter Two

The Refugee Background

Introduction

In this chapter, I will present some literature on the status of refugees worldwide and also specifically within the New Zealand context. The chapter also provides the background to the ethnic nationalism in Bhutan that gave rise to the Bhutanese refugee crisis, and the current situations of the Bhutanese refugees in New Zealand, the target population for this thesis.

Refugees

The definition of "refugee" according to the United Nations Refugee Convention, 1951 is:

"Any person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it." - (UNHCR, 2012).

Pahud (2008) notes that the drawback of this definition is that it is very narrow and only covers those people who have fled their homelands and sought sanctuary in a second country for humanitarian protection. There are millions of people worldwide who face similar circumstances but since they do not legally fit the description of a 'refugee' they are not eligible for protection. These include, (i) Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) who have been forced to flee their homes but have not actually crossed

an internationally recognised border, (ii) Returnees – persons who have returned to their countries or usual place of residence, (iii) Stateless persons – who are not considered as nationals by any state (UNHCR, 2006)

According to the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR), there are 65.3 million people forcibly displaced around the world and more than 21.3 million of these are recognised as refugees (UNHCR, 2016). Nearly 34,000 people are forcibly displaced from their home countries per day because of internal conflict and persecution. It has also been reported that by the end of 2015 there were around 3.8 million people of concern living in the Asia and Pacific region alone (UNHCR, 2016).

At this stage it should also be noted that there are differences between people who are classified as 'immigrants' and 'refugees'. Most immigrants have left their countries by choice and are not forced out of their homelands and thus are not eligible for the internationally endorsed rights stipulated by the United Nations protocol (Feller, 2005; Pahud, 2008). Refugees are sometimes also considered as immigrants but it should be highlighted that they would come under the category of 'forced immigrants'. According to Feller (2005) it is important that the public is informed about the major differences between these two groups primarily because of the negative stereotypes that are imposed by the media. Feller (2005) has observed that even support organizations tend to frequently mix the needs of refugees and immigrants owing to an ignorance of the difference between these two groups. All the participants within this thesis come under the category of refugees since they were all resettled in New Zealand by the UNHCR.

Refugees in New Zealand

Refugees have been arriving in New Zealand since the mid-19th century and following World War II from troubled locations across the globe (Guerin, Abdi & Guerin, 2003). New Zealand's first major involvement in refugee support began in November 1944 with the arrival of nearly 900 Polish civilians mainly consisting of children from war-torn Europe (Pahud, 2008).

There are three categories of refugees currently hosted in New Zealand – quota refugees, conventional refugees or asylum seekers and family reunification refugees. Quota refugees are defined by the UNHCR as those who are invited by a host country (in this case New Zealand) to resettle (McLeod & Reeve, 2005; O'Connor, 2014). Quota refugees include people who are already registered with the UNHCR. Those who are selected as quota refugees are restricted to bringing their partners and children only. This category has three sub-categories (Gray & Elliott, 2001):

- Protection cases – these are high priority refugees because they need protection from an emergency situation

- Women at risk – these are women refugees (alone or with dependent children) at risk in a refugee camp, especially from sexual violence and

- Medical and/or disabled cases – these are refugees who have a medical condition or disability which cannot be treated in the country of asylum but can be treated in New Zealand.

There has been a cumulative growth of the refugee population in New Zealand. New Zealand is signatory to the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the status of refugees and to its 1967 protocol (Osman, 2012) and the government is committed to consider all claims for refugee status made at its borders and must allow claimants to remain in its territory until their status has been assessed. In the last decade New Zealand has resettled more than 7000 refugees from more than 55 different countries (Mortensen, et al, 2011). Most of the resettled refugees in New Zealand have arrived from the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and Southeast Asian countries like Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos (Young, 2001; Mortensen et al, 2011; Pahud, 2008). With the entrance of these refugees from cultures and economic development far remote from that of New Zealand, the society has become increasingly multicultural with varying needs and adaptation skills (NZ Immigration services, 2004).

On an annual basis New Zealand provides 750 refugees the opportunity to resettle permanently (Marlowe, 2013). However, this figure has remained the same since 1987 and the New Zealand government has recently faced immense criticism for

'staining the country's reputation as good global citizen' by not increasing the quota (Kirk, 2016). In 2014, New Zealand's total refugee population was 1349, which was five times less than Australia, and about 47 times less than Sweden (Fyers, 2015). Given that New Zealand only takes in 750 refugees per year, it is postulated that the actual growth in the refugee population is due to the numbers building on each other – rather than a response to the worldwide humanitarian crisis. In response to the situation in Syria the New Zealand government has announced that it will be increasing its refugee intake from 750 to 1000 from 2018 and then subsequently increase their intake from 50 to 100 over the next three years to maintain flexibility to respond to global events (Kirk, 2016). Even this decision of the government to increase its intake by 250 refugees has come in for tremendous criticism as agencies feel that it is still not keeping up with the current growth of the refugee population.

In addition to quota refugees New Zealand also accepts 'convention refugees' and family reunification refugees. Convention refugees or asylum seekers are those who claim to be refugees but whose claims have not been definitively evaluated (as cited in www.unhcr.org). These refugees usually cross over another country's border and then have to wait until their new adopted country recognizes them and grants them entry (Osman, 2012; Cotton, 1999). According to the UNHCR, about 1 million people seek to become convention refugees every year. Currently, about forty asylum seekers a week make applications for refugee status in Auckland (Young, 2001). Successful applicants then have the same rights as refugees (Cotton, 1999). In 2013, the New Zealand government passed a legislation to deter arrivals into the country by boat (UNHCR, 2015).

The final category of refugees are family reunification refugees who are sponsored to come to a country by their family members who were former refugees but are now citizens or permanent residents in a new host country (Osman, 2012). The New Zealand government currently offers this opportunity by permitting former resettled refugees to sponsor their family members' resettlement.

All refugees who have been accepted into New Zealand, have to complete a six week orientation programme at the Department of Immigration's Mangere refugee resettlement centre. At Mangere centre, they are provided facilities like opportunities to attend English classes suited to their level of learning, school for their children and

general orientation on topics like health and safety in New Zealand, parenting, preparing for employment and understanding New Zealand laws. After the six-week orientation they are then resettled in one of five major communities in New Zealand namely Auckland, Waikato, Manawatu, Greater Wellington, and Nelson (O'Connor, 2014). Christchurch used to host refugees until the great Canterbury earthquakes of 2010-2011, hence all allotments for Christchurch have been discontinued since 2012 (Nelson Multicultural Council, 2012).

All quota refugees are offered permanent resident status on entering New Zealand and thus are eligible for a range of benefits and allowances in the areas of education, health, employment and social welfare. After residing in New Zealand for five years, they are allowed to apply for citizenship status (O'Connor, 2014). When the former refugees (the use of this term has been explained in the first chapter) arrive in their area of resettlement, they are supported by a range of qualified social workers and volunteers who assist them in managing their new lives and lead them towards employment. Social workers also assist the families in addressing physical and mental health issues by providing the appropriate support and referrals (O'Connor, 2014).

Bhutanese refugees in New Zealand

The New Zealand government announced its inclusion of Bhutanese refugees in its annual refugee quota in 2007 and the first selection mission to the camps in Nepal took place in 2008 with the first cohort of refugees arriving shortly thereafter.

The cultural word used for the Bhutanese refugees is 'Lhotshampa', which indicates that these are Bhutanese people who were ethnically Nepali (Krishnan et al, 2011). Although Hutt (1996) suggests that the terms 'Lhotshampa', 'Nepali Bhutanese', 'Bhutanese Nepali' do not necessarily mean the same thing and thus should not be used interchangeably, for the sake of consistency, the current research uses the terms 'Lhotshampa' or 'Bhutanese refugees'.

The predicament of the Lhotshampa's arose from what Smith (1994) defines as ethnic nationalism. Smith defines ethnic nationalism in the following terms:

"Ethnic nationalism does not involve a specifically racist component, but manages to exclude non- members within and deny their rights, while preserving their essential humanity. Instead of being exterminated, they are rendered homeless. As indigestible minorities in their own homes, they suddenly find themselves deprived of a homeland. They are felt to constitute a threat to the continued existence, and purity of the emergent ethnic nation. They must therefore be denied citizenship in their own land, rendered defenceless and homeless and ultimately driven out" (Smith, 1994 p 195)

According to Rose (1994) somewhere in the early 19th Century the Bhutanese government recruited the Lhotshampa to southern Bhutan for the purpose of land cultivation. Shortly thereafter the Lhotshampa became the country's main suppliers of food. The Lhotshampa's were predominantly Hindu and remained unintegrated with Bhutan's Buddhist majority until 1958 (UNHCR, 2006). Rose (1994) asserts that many of the Lhotshampa's were Nepalese who were expelled from the tribal hill states of the Indian Northeast during the *bhumiputra* (sons of the soil) movements of the late 1970's and early 1980's and then came and settled illegally in southern Bhutan. In time they joined others who had entered Bhutan to work on infrastructural development projects and then stayed on illegally but with the tacit consent of the government (Rose, 1994).

In 1958, the Lhotshampa's were granted Bhutanese citizenship and tenure of its lands (Hutt, 1996). The government then also began training Lhotshampa's for government service and even began offering cash incentives to encourage inter-marriages between Lhotshampa's and local Bhutanese. The Lhotshampa's thus began playing a more important role in the functioning of the kingdom and on occasion even represented the kingdom overseas (Hutt, 1996). By the late 1980's the Buddhist Bhutanese began to feel their culture threatened by the growing Lhotshampa population. The Bhutanese government feared that if they continued to allow their country's citizenship laws to be circumvented and allowed the immigrants to rise to power then their indigenous Bhutanese would be reduced to a minority in their own country and the immigrant minorities would turn themselves into a majority (Planning Commission, 1999; Evans, 2010).

In 1985, a new citizenship act was passed which amended the previous legislation that provided citizenship by birth through the father's citizenship status alone, now in order to be acquired it needed to come from both parents. And for

citizenship to be granted by naturalization there were a number of criteria such as fluency in Dzongkha (the Tibetan derived national language) which could not be met by most of the Lhotshampa's (Hutt, 1996). The citizenship act of 1985 implemented a 'One Nation, One People' policy with the purpose of promoting a homogenous ethnic and religious national identity (Evans, 2010). This policy was viewed as a 'Bhutanization' of the country and giving privileges to the Buddhist culture and religion and was naturally perceived as discriminatory by the Hindu Lhotshampa minority (Rizal, 2004).

Strengthening the role and status of Dzongkha language was one of the cardinal priorities of the Bhutanese government's policy since the late 1980's and one of the consequences of this was the downgrading of the Nepali language. In 1990, the teaching of Nepali was discontinued and all Nepali curricular materials disappeared from the Bhutanese schools. This move came on top of the census and citizenship tensions already prevalent and only served to add to the growing sense of cultural marginalization among the Lhotshampa's (UNHCR, 2006; Hutt, 1996). The house of Bhutan made compulsory the Bhutanese language and also their traditional dress and etiquette and these rules were strongly imposed by officials and attracted fines for those who did not obey them. There were reports of Lhotshampa's being refused treatment at hospitals because they were not wearing the Bhutanese dress (Evans, 2010).

Following this, serious unrest began to spread across southern Bhutan from early 1990 onwards and during these stages unknown persons with possible political influence adopted violent tactics which were espoused by an extremist element. The Lhotshampa's organized mass public demonstrations in Bhutan in September and October 1990 that were unprecedented in the kingdom's history. The Lhotshampa's shouting slogans of human rights and democracy made the rulers of Bhutan perceive them as a threat to their own position as an exposed minority in that corner of the continent (Hutt, 1996). The government responded to the protests of the Lhotshampa's by branding all of them as 'anti-nationals' and then deploying the Royal Bhutan Army to 'crush' the movement. This resulted in mass arrests, flogging, torture, rape, arson, looting and plunder (Human Rights Organisation of Bhutan, 1992, Evans, 2010).

The Bhutanese army and police additionally began identifying participants and supporters and they were arrested, beaten tortured and detained for months without a

trial (Hutt, 1996). Many of the Lhotshampa's reported being tortured by severe beatings, forced to commit incongruent acts which violated their cultural and religious beliefs, being deprived of sleep and nutrition, being tied down, public undressing and chepuwa which is a Bhutanese torture technique involving the tight clamping of the thighs or legs with bamboo, sometimes for a number of days (Shreestha et al, 1998). Furthermore, people who had been classified as full citizens in earlier censuses began to find themselves evicted from Bhutan because they had a relative in jail or in the refugee camps and according to the Bhutan citizenship act of 1985 people could be deprived of their citizenship if they were proven to be disloyal to the king in any manner (Hutt, 1996).

Following the force used by the Bhutanese army many of the Lhotshampa political activists and the villagers who were accused by the government of being involved in the protests began leaving the country, the main reason they reported for fleeing at this stage was their fear of persecution and continuous harassment (AHURA, 2000). Schools and hospitals in the southern parts of Bhutan where the Lhotshampa's lived were shut down and all developmental projects that were being undertaken by the government drew to a halt (Hutt, 2003). The government indicated that these steps were necessary on account of large-scale acts of terrorism that were unleashed by the anti-nationals, but the Lhotshampa's maintained that these were acts of collective punishment against them. Lhotshampa's had to obtain 'No Objection Certificates' from the police indicating that that they had not taken part in any oppositional activity if they wanted to access government employment or educational institutions. Rumours of the Bhutanese army raping Lhotshampa girls and women contributed to their insecurities and fuelled their decision to leave the country (Hutt, 2003).

Most of the refugees began leaving Bhutan in 1990 and most had left by 1992 (AHURA, 2000). The first cohort of refugees arrived in Nepal at the end of 1990 and it is estimated that there were 234 of them initially and they were followed by several hundred per month reaching a total of about 5000 by September 1991 (Hutt, 1996). By the end of 1992, an estimated 80,000 Lhotshampa were living in UNHCR administered camps in Nepal (Krishnan et al, 2011). AHURA (2000) surveyed more than 49, 909 refugees who were living in the camp during those years in order to assess the reasons why they had left the country. According to AHURA's report 99.82% of the surveyed refugees possessed 'incontrovertible 'evidence of their Bhutanese citizenship. Most of

them reported that they fled Bhutan owing to harassment by the security forces. Family members of those who had been arrested were made to sign voluntary migration forms if they wanted their relatives to be released. Those who had been detained by the army were threatened with re-arrest if they did not leave the country after being released. The government also instructed village heads to order certain families to leave and all the remaining were deemed as non-nationals after the census and were evicted (AHURA, 2000)

The Nepali government formally requested the UNHCR to coordinate all emergency relief assistance. The first arrivals set up camps on the banks of the Mai River in Nepal but as the numbers grew the camp spread into the riverbed itself (Hutt, 1996). Mortality rates and malnutrition was high particularly because many of the first arrivals had already spent months struggling to survive near the Bhutan border. The numbers of refugees steadily increased throughout 1991 and by mid-1992 there were up to 600 refugees arriving per day (Hutt, 2003). According to the UNHCR census the number of refugees in the camp by 2007 had reached 1, 07,923 with the increase in numbers being primarily due to refugee children being born into the camps (UNHCR, 2008). Like most of the refugees around the world, the Bhutanese were not legally permitted to hold employment, possess land, leave the camps or even engage in political activities, which enforced their dependency on international aid (Muggah, 2005; Evans, 2010). They received food and household rations from the world food programme and the Nepal Red Cross (Hutt, 1996). Apart from malnutrition, many refugees also reported an unusually high level of mental illness and the rate of suicide among the exiled Bhutanese was purported to be approximately four times higher than among the local Nepalese population (HRW, 2003; Muggah 2005).

Though the Nepalese government always advocated an honourable and respectful repatriation they have consistently reiterated that the refugees are the responsibility of the Kingdom of Bhutan and hence never expressed any interest in integrating them (Loescher & Milner, 2005). The Bhutanese government on the other hand claimed that that most of the refugees were people of Nepali origin who had been invited to Bhutan by the anti-nationals to inflate their numbers hence declined to allow them the right to return to Bhutan (Evans, 2010). Owing to 'fruitless' rounds of bilateral negotiations between the Bhutanese and Nepalese government all the Lhotshampa's remained unaccepted in either country and without and citizenship status or rights

(Loescher & Milner, 2005; Laenkholm, 2007). The UNHCR tried hard to find a durable solution for the Bhutanese in Nepal but this proved to be quite a challenging task with the government of Nepal opposing local integration of the Lhotshampa and most of the refugee leaders opposing local integration as well (Krishnan et al, 2011). On the international front repatriating the refugees was seen as an unrealistic prospect at the time because the human rights situation of the remaining ethnic Nepalese in Bhutan was highly precarious (UNHCR, 2006; Laenkholm, 2007). Also there were no guarantees that any returning Lhotshampa's would be granted legal citizenship especially given the Bhutan government's ambivalence towards the ethnic Nepalese and the absence of a UNHCR presence in Bhutan at that time (Laenkholm, 2007).

In 2006, UNHCR acknowledged that the Lhotshampa had a very slim chance of re-acquiring their citizenship or of returning home (UNHCR, 2006). The UNHCR also acknowledged that its efforts to repatriate these Lhotshampa had failed since the United Nations had not succeeded in brokering any solutions for them. At this point the UNHCR sought assistance from other counties to support third country resettlement as a solution to this problem and the Bhutanese people stranded in Nepal were seen as a priority for resettlement (Executive committee of the high commissioner's program, 2008).

Many countries came forward to support the efforts to resettle the Lhotshampa including Denmark, Canada, United States, The Netherlands, Norway and Australia (Banki, 2008). But the first country to accept Bhutanese refugees for resettlement was New Zealand in 2007. Resettlement was the best option available to the refugees at that time because it offered them and their families the possibilities of better education and job prospects and most importantly they could live their lives in safer environments (Laenkholm, 2007). While many refugees saw resettlement as tantamount to absolving the Bhutanese government of its responsibility to make amends for the blatant violation of the Lhotshampas' human rights, in the end it was the option that over 80% of the refugees choose. No other option seemed viable at the time, and also the young refugees had either never known or could not remember life in Bhutan hence had little enthusiasm for repatriation (Laenkholm, 2007). In 2014, more than 8,000 refugees from Bhutan benefitted from third-country resettlement. Since the inception of the programme in 2007, nearly 94,500 refugees from Bhutan have been resettled to third countries. In 2014, UNHCR conducted a "last call" exercise for group resettlement.

While some 2,000 refugees opted out, a further 10,000 to 12,000 of this group may be resettled by the end of 2016 (UNHCR, 2014).

In 2007-2008, 75 Bhutanese were accepted as part of the annual refugee quota of New Zealand and these people were mostly settled either in Palmerston North or Christchurch. In 2008-2009 195 refugees were included in the annual intake quota, 176 were accepted in the quota for 2009-2010 and until April 2011, 105 Bhutanese refugees were accepted into New Zealand. In addition to Palmerston North and Christchurch, many of the Bhutanese refugees began being resettled in Nelson. These cities were selected by the government to resettle the refugees because apart from having the availability, they were deemed to be a good fit in terms of environment and housing and could thus offer these people a good resettlement foundation (Krishnan et al, 2011).

Presently, owing to the series of earthquakes that shook Christchurch from 2010 – 2012, the city no longer hosts any more incoming refugees (Settling refugees in Christchurch, 2012). Available data suggest that that the 105 Bhutanese refugees who came in 2011 were the last Lhotshampas to be resettled in Christchurch.

Chapter Summary

The goal of this chapter was to present how refugees as a category are conceptualized by the UNHCR and also to present some statistics on refugees around the world and also within New Zealand. The focus of this chapter was to present detailed background information about the crisis in Bhutan during the late 20th century that led to the predicament of the Bhutanese refugees. Details about the torture suffered by the Lhotshampas at the hands of the house of Bhutan were presented along with their journey into the refugee camps in Nepal and the subsequent negotiations by UNHCR that led to them being resettled overseas. Some details of refugee resettlement in New Zealand have also been presented in this chapter. As will be discussed later in this thesis, the participants in this research were born after the ethnic nationalism in Bhutan and hence have not experienced the flight from Bhutan into Nepal. But this information has been presented to provide some understanding of the background of the participants and the events that led to them becoming refugees.

Chapter Three

Review of Literature

Introduction

This research had two main goals. The first was to explore the personal strengths and capacities of the resettled Bhutanese youth and the second was to explore whether attending mindfulness-infused counselling sessions influenced their existing capacities, or provided them new ways of dealing with their life circumstances. In this chapter, therefore, I will present relevant literature pertaining to the capacities of former refugees and the mindfulness-infused counselling approach that was used as part of this research. Through this chapter I intend to demonstrate how this literature informed my thesis. As appropriate, when engaging in qualitative research, some of the reviewed literature was determined by the research goals, whereas some literature was explored subsequent to the data analysis – when unanticipated themes began to emerge

There are four sections of relevant literature. The first section presents literature on adolescence and youth to clarify the differences between the two and how they are applicable within my thesis. The second section presents literature on counselling – particularly Carl Rogers' person-centred approach, since this approach guided the counselling offered in this thesis. Some criticisms of person-centred therapy, along with how these were addressed, has also been reported in this chapter. The outcomes and benefits of person-centred counselling in clinical and non-clinical settings as well as a section on engaging youth in counselling are also presented. The third section presents the roots of mindfulness, its applications in psychotherapy and some of the misconceptions surrounding the process. The therapeutic outcomes of mindfulness in counselling and psychotherapy is also discussed.

When I began reviewing the literature for my thesis I noted that much of the literature on the strengths and capacities of refugees termed them as 'ways of coping' and 'resilience'. Hence, the fourth section of this chapter reviews literature on resilience and coping. I found that this literature on coping and resilience helped make sense of

the narratives of my participants thus making a valuable contribution not only to my understanding of these concepts but also to the process of data analysis.

Section I – Adolescence and youth

Since the thesis participants are deemed former refugee youth, it is important to clarify the difference between the age groups that are regarded as youth and adolescence in the literature. According to western literature, adolescence is regarded as the transition phase where the person is moving from childhood to early adulthood (Santrock, 2014). This literature postulates that adolescence begins approximately between 10 to 12 years of age and ends somewhere between 18 to 22 years of age (Papalia et al, 1992; Santrock, 2014). Because of the prolonged nature of adolescence there is a consensus among contemporary researchers that this phase of life should be viewed in three phases (Cobb, 1995; Rubenstein, 1991; Arnett, 2014; Schroder, 2003). While researchers label these phases differently they include the groups listed below –

- **Early Adolescence**: this phase spans the ages of nine to fourteen and is characterized by the onset of puberty and marked physical development (Rubenstein, 1991).
- **Middle Adolescence**: this phase spans the ages of 15 to 17 years and is dominated by peer involvement, loosening family ties and increased relationships with members of the opposite sex (Rubenstein, 1991).
- **Late Adolescence**: or young adulthood: this phase spans the years 18 to 25 and is characterized by the continued influence of peer relations. It is a time when the traditional roles of transition to the workforce and longer-term intimate couple relationships are established (Santrock, 2014).

Another term that is sometimes used to describe the above age groups is ‘youth’. According to the United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO), ‘Youth’ is defined as the period of life where a person leaves compulsory education until the time where they find their first employment (UNESCO, 2017). However, this gap has been widening with higher levels of unemployment and the prolonged period where young people are dependent on their families (UNESCO,

2017). As demonstrated from the definitions above the three phases i.e. youth, adolescence and early adulthood clearly overlap each other and this overlap creates confusion regarding the terminology to be used for this age group when conducting research. 'Adolescent' and 'young adult' are terms that are used primarily in the literature of developmental psychology (e.g. Newman & Newman, 2014) and refer specifically to certain age groups.

A point of concern while adopting terms like adolescence and young adult is that they imply an alignment with the 'stage theory' of development (Piaget, 2000). Aligning with this view implies the perception of these phases of development as 'prescriptions' for what a person is supposed to achieve at each stage. Researchers like Harris (1983) and Weiten et al (1992) have postulated that people can vary widely across these stages and some people may achieve these prescribed levels ahead of their time while others may not achieve them at all. According to these researchers, perceiving these years as stages may be overly arbitrary (Harris, 1983; Weiten et al, 1992). The term 'youth' on the other hand is a term used to describe the age as well as the attitude of a person and generally denotes qualities of energy and exuberance – which are typical of young people.

While this thesis focuses on the late adolescence or young adulthood age groups, the focus on the participants is not from a developmental or a 'stage' perspective, hence the term 'youth' will be used in this thesis. The majority of the literature presented within this chapter uses the words adolescents, young people or young adults so I should clarify that at the time of reviewing literature it was determined that all the literature presented in this chapter is pertinent to the age group I worked with in my research.

Development during adolescence

Considering that the focus of my thesis is youth of refugee backgrounds, I will begin by briefly presenting some literature around the development of this age group.

For a variety of historical and 'policy-related' reasons, much of the work in developmental science has focused on adolescence as a time of 'risk to development'

and ‘adjustment disorders’ (Eccles et al, 1993; Newman & Newman, 2014). Although most individuals pass through this developmental period without excessively high levels of stress, there are some individuals who have been found to experience difficulties during this period and many of these difficulties appear to begin during the early adolescent years (Eccles et al, 1993). Some researchers like Simmons and Blyth (1987) have noted that early adolescent years mark the beginning of a downward spiral for some individuals owing to the changes that take place in their schooling environment. Other researchers such as Buchanan et al (1992) and Collins (1990) have noted that adolescence is also a period characterized by changes in family interactions particularly over issues related to autonomy and control – these in turn lead to a temporary increase in family conflict. While these findings are neither universal nor indicative of major disruptions for most adolescents, some research has been identified (e.g. Holmbeck & Hill, 1988; Steinberg, 2004) that indicates that there is an increase in conflict between mothers and their adolescent sons and daughters.

A variety of explanations have been offered to explain these negative changes. Blos (1965) suggested that such conflicts are on account of the intrapsychic upheaval assumed to be associated with early adolescent development. Blyth et al (1983) have suggested that these changes are a coincidence of the timing of multiple life changes. Eccles et al (1993) have suggested that these conflicts are a result of the changes in the nature of the learning environment because individuals are not likely to be motivated at school if the environment they are in does not meet their psychological needs.

Other research on adolescence maintains that this phase of life is characterized by a young person’s increased need to regulate their affect and behaviour (Steinberg, 2004) at a distance from the adults who provided regulatory structure and guidance during childhood. Other authors like Donald (2001) and Keating (2007) have highlighted that the core of adolescent development is the attainment of a more fully conscious, self-directed and self-regulating mind. Despite the varying postulations of what cognitive elements develop during adolescence there is one consensus among developmental theorists, that adolescents display marked improvements in reasoning, information processing and expertise (Keating, 2007; Donald, 2001; Steinberg, 2004).

Other developmental research has demonstrated that adolescent thinking in the real world is a result of the interaction between social, emotional and cognitive

processes (Miller & Byrnes, 1997; Maggs et al, 1995; Cauffman & Steinberg, 2000). Steinberg (2005) demonstrated this interaction of processes by researching why adolescents are more prone to indulging in risk-taking behaviour as compared to adults. According to Steinberg, adults and adolescents share the same logical competencies but it is the age differences in social and emotional factors, such as susceptibility to peer influence or impulse control, which accounts for the difference in making decisions. Research has found that adolescents' risk taking behaviour is more influenced by the presence of peers than adults (Steinberg, 2005; Gardner & Steinberg, 2005). This finding would make adolescents seem like poor decision-makers with poor cognitive skills. However, other researchers such as Benthin et al (1995) and Martin et al (2002) have demonstrated through further research that many adolescents engage in dangerous activities despite knowing and understanding the risks involved. These researchers concluded that in real-life situations adolescents do not weigh up the relative risks and consequences of their behaviour because their actions are largely influenced by feelings and social influences (Benthin et al, 1995; Martin et al, 2002; Steinberg, 2004).

Late adolescence is a phase of life marked by continued developmental changes together with challenges associated with acquiring competencies, attitudes, values and the social capital necessary to make a successful transition into adulthood (Zarrett & Eccles, 2006). Santrock (2014) considers this life phase to be important as individuals begin to make choices and engage in a variety of activities that are influential on the rest of their lives. Late adolescents, also referred to as emerging adults (Zarrett & Eccles, 2006) are faced with challenges about vocational training, entry into the labour market, moving out of the family home and sometimes even marriage and parenthood.

According to Zarrett and Eccles (2006) emerging adults are expected to be increasingly independent, acquire and manage greater responsibilities and take an active interest in their personal development. However, this phase of life also comes with its own challenges primarily since these individuals begin to take on more demanding roles they also need to learn to manage these roles effectively. Emerging adults also need to be aware of their personal strengths and shortcomings so that they can manage them and succeed in their new roles. Most importantly emerging adults need to make the necessary life changes in order to cope with the changes of their new job or educational roles. The successful resolution of all these challenges depends on the psychosocial, physical and cognitive assets of the person together with the social

support available and the developmental settings in which young people can explore and interact with these challenges (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Zarrett & Eccles, 2006).

The literature presented above provides a glimpse of the development pathway and the challenges that adolescents need to deal with. It might seem convenient then to assume that since the participants in my research were all emerging adults that they have also experienced or are currently experiencing the issues described above and hence all their responses came from this phase of their development. However, researchers such as Kinzie (2001) highlight that assumptions about development and normality are culturally embedded. One of the critiques of developmental theories is that they rely on Western, middle class constructions of childhood and have questionable cross-cultural generalizability (Lustig et al, 2004). Most of the theories presented in this section also fall within that category since they were found to be lacking in culturally diverse data.

This criticism is particularly relevant for my thesis as these theories may provide some understanding of the challenges of young adults, but it also highlights that the youth I am working with have not had childhoods that fit the 'normal'. As Fazel et al (2012) pointed out, adolescents who flee persecution and resettle in high-income countries often endure great physical and mental challenges during displacement and suffer continuing hardships after they arrive in their new country. This needs to be considered when reading the narratives of my participants because within New Zealand they may be regarded as adolescents but their previous experiences may mean that they have had to take on adult responsibilities early in life and thus may have been denied any transition time.

Section II – Counselling

The following section describes counselling, particularly the person-centred approach to counselling. Since this thesis involves the counselling of refugee youth it is important to describe some of the definitions as well as the key elements of counselling. The person-centred approach has been described in detail, as it was the counselling approach followed in this thesis. Some studies on how clients have

responded to person-centred therapy as well as some common criticisms of this approach have been presented in this section.

Definition and Background

There are a number of different definitions of counselling. For example the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (2017) have defined counselling as:

"Counselling is the process of helping and supporting a person to resolve personal, social, or psychological challenges and difficulties. A professional and well-trained counsellor helps clients to see things more clearly, possibly from a different view-point, and supports clients to focus on feelings, experiences or behaviour that will facilitate positive change." (As cited in www.nzac.org.nz)

This definition espouses a relationship between a counsellor and a person in need of help and support – the client. It should be noted however, that the relationship between a counsellor and a client is a professional one and not one where the counsellor gets emotionally involved with the client while he/she attempts to sort out their problems for them. Furthermore, the counsellor also does not give out advice or encourage the client to take on his or her own opinions and ways of coping (as cited in www.nzac.org.nz)

Burks and Stefflre provided a more traditional definition of the process of counselling in 1979. According to them -

"Counselling is a professional relationship between a trained counsellor and a client designed to help clients to understand and clarify their views of their life space and to learn to reach their self-determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices and through resolution of problems of an emotional or interpersonal nature"

John McLeod (2013) proposed a definition which again espouses the fact that counselling always involves more than one person and arises when one person seeks help of another.

"Counselling is a purposeful, private conversation arising from the intention of one person (couple or family) to reflect on and resolve a problem in living and the willingness of another person to assist in that endeavour" (Mcleod, 2013: p 7)

This definition shifts the focus of the process of counselling from 'something done by a counsellor' to a process where the client is a co-participant rather than a passive recipient in the process (McLeod, 2013). This definition also implies that counselling as an activity can only happen if the person seeking help (the client) wants it to happen. Thus counselling as a process is not focussing on reducing a person's symptoms but on the person's capacity to 'talk things through' and to generate new possibilities for action through dialogue. A relationship with the counsellor is fundamental to the counselling process because the counsellor is assigned the task of providing a secure environment to allow the person seeking help to explore issues that are painful and troubling (Mcleod, 2013).

All the above definitions describe varying processes and outcomes of counselling but at the core of each of them is a respectful relationship with a trained professional. The above definitions also capture the fact that there is no one definitive method of counselling, and different theoretical approaches conceptualize counselling differently. The definition by McLeod is the one that is preferred for this thesis because it is consistent with the person-centred approach which has been adopted by me and also because it espouses the researcher's belief that counselling is not a process of 'doing to' but rather a relationship where one person talks things through with the full attention and commitment of the counsellor. The counselling that was offered as part of this thesis was of this kind and has been described in some detail in the section below.

Person-centred therapy

Person-centred therapy was proposed by Carl Rogers in 1940 at the University of Minnesota, it was at this stage proposed as 'client-centred' therapy (Raskin et al, 2008). In 1974, Rogers and his colleagues changed its name from client-centred to person-centred therapy as they believed that it would more adequately describe the

human values underlying the approach and could then also apply to contexts other than counselling and psychotherapy (Nelson-Jones, 2011).

In person-centred therapy the clients are responsible for setting their own purposes and goals. The therapist does not tell the clients where they should be going or even suggest how to get there. In contrast to other forms of therapy, person-centred therapy does not have any process of assessment and goal setting at the start of therapy. Clients may come in with some goals and then within the context of a safe therapeutic relationship choose to reveal further goals and may formulate different goals as the therapy progresses. Much of the therapy focuses on helping clients become more in touch with their feelings and making them feel valued as individuals (Rogers, 1959; Koch & Leary, 1992; Nelson-Jones, 2011).

Person-centred therapy is built on a basic trust of the client's ability, within a growth-promoting climate, to actualize their potential. Person-centred counsellors encourage their clients to assume responsibility for the content of the sessions and the process generally starts with an invitation indicating that the therapist will be an interested listener to whatever the client wants to share (Raskin et al, 2008). There is no form of assessment during the therapy process since all clients are viewed as being out of touch with their experience on account of their 'conditions of worth'. Conditions of worth was a term used by Rogers to describe a person's values which are based on other's evaluations rather than on the individual's own organismic valuing process (Hall et al, 1959). These conditions are prevalent because often people are culturally conditioned and rewarded for behaviours that are in fact in variance with their real feelings (Rogers, 1979).

Person-centred therapy does not rely on techniques or on doing things to clients because Rogers believed that in therapy it is the quality of the interpersonal encounter with the client which is the most significant element in determining effectiveness (Rogers, 1979). Contemporary researchers like Marchant & Payne (2002) and Rosanne Knox (2008) have supported this maxim. Person-centred therapy is a process that can intensely involve the thoughts of the clients and their therapists, and therapists strive to provide the attitudinal and emotional conditions that are the antidote to the emotional deprivations that the client has experienced (Nelson-Jones, 2011). Rogers regarded congruence, unconditional positive regard and empathy as the attitudinal conditions

that foster healing from these emotional deprivations, he also stressed that they are not all-or-none conditions but exist on a continuum (as cited in Sadock, 1983). These three conditions are explained below.

Congruence – Congruence is the most basic of the attitudinal conditions. Other words for congruence include genuineness, openness and presence. A therapist who is congruent should encounter his clients in direct person-to-person contact and should avoid taking an intellectual approach where the client would be treated as an object. The congruent therapist should also acknowledge that he is not playing roles or putting on professional facades (Nelson-Jones, 2011).

Congruence does not mean that therapists 'blurt out impulsively every passing feeling' (Rogers, 1979), nor does it mean that they allow their sessions to become therapist centred. But it means that therapists might take the risk of sharing a feeling or giving some feedback that might improve the relationship because it is expressed genuinely. According to Marchant & Payne (2002) counsellors who addressed clients' conditions in a congruent manner were perceived as more helpful because these counsellors were perceived as responding from a deeper level of reality than others (Barret-Lennard, 1998; Marchant & Payne, 2002). Rogers acknowledged that no-one fully achieves congruence all the time. Imperfect human beings are more than capable of being of assistance to clients (Nelson-Jones, 2011).

This attitude proposed by Rogers has come under a lot of criticism (Essays UK, 2013). At one level the therapist is trained to accept or at least strive to accept their client. But at a personal level they may have feelings like anger, irritation, unease or rejection towards their clients which they cannot deny that they have. A congruent therapist is then faced with the task of deciding whether, when and how to voice these feelings. Even if the therapist deems to say these things nicely and professionally the client may experience them as rejecting or conditional. Apart from this, there might be times in therapy where the client might actually benefit from some straight talking about their behaviour and at times like these pretences need to be set aside (Feltham, 2010).

Unconditional Positive Regard – Unconditional positive regard (UPR) relates to the therapist's deep trust in their client's capacity for constructive change if provided with the right nurturing conditions (Nelson-Jones, 2011). UPR involves the therapist's willingness for clients to feel and act out whatever feeling they are immediately feeling

whether it is confusion, resentment, fear, courage, love or pride. Carl Rogers made an analogy between parents' love and UPR because parents would prize their children as people regardless of their particular behaviours (Rogers, 1986). Person-centred therapists (like the parents) always show positive regard for their clients and not only 'if' they are smarter, 'if' they are less defensive, 'if 'they less vulnerable and so on. According to the person-centred approach of therapy, people seek therapy because in their past they were shown positive regard – 'if' they first did something to deserve it.

This condition of Roger's has also been criticized by practitioners who believe that assuming a counsellor is always unconditional places too much emphasis on his or her ability to rise above typical social values and prejudices (Feltham, 2010). Richard Nelson-Jones has argued that there are boundaries to showing UPR with a client because it does not mean that therapists need to approve of all their clients' behaviours' for instance if a client physically threatens the therapist (Nelson-Jones, 2011). Some practitioners believe that it is possible to declare to the client that we do not like their attitudes but accept them as people. Feltham (2010) points out, this is seldom so straightforward, especially since the therapist also has to also be congruent with his/her own feelings. There would be occasions when congruence and UPR were in conflict for the therapist

Empathy – According to Rogers empathy is "To sense the client's private world as if it were your own, but without ever losing the *'as if'* quality (Rogers, 1957). Therapists need to get into the shoes of their clients to understand their private subjective worlds. They need to be sensitive to the moment-by-moment flow of experiencing that goes on in both clients and themselves. Empathy is an active process through which the therapist desires to know and reach out to receive their client's communications and meanings. An empathic attitude creates an emotional climate in which clients can assist their therapists to understand them more accurately (Barret-Lennard, 1998; Nelson-Jones, 2011). This principle is one that I would personally challenge. Roger's conceptualization of empathy implies that the counsellor must detach himself or herself from the client's stories in order to better understand them. I view this as unreasonable pressure on the counsellor to stay aloof from the client's feelings while facilitating the session. Further, if this principle is rigidly adhered to, it has the potential to bring an element of superficiality into the sessions – since the counsellor is remaining detached. In my opinion, the best way to address this is to

experience the client's stories as they are talked about in the sessions and then for the counsellor to work through these feelings with the help of a supervisor.

The methods that were employed during the sessions provided in this research as well as my notes on the counselling sessions, and the client's responses to the therapy, will be elucidated in subsequent chapters.

Clients' Perceptions of Person-Centred Counselling

The current literature on the applications of client-centred or person-centred therapy with specific target populations is not very extensive. This is primarily because the person-centred approach to counselling does not advocate the categorisation or diagnosis of its clients. Humanistic counsellors do not use specific techniques for specific clients hence the focus in the sessions is the client and not the problem they present (Marchant & Payne, 2002; Joseph & Worsley, 2005; Payne et al, 2007). The section below presents some of the available findings and the perceptions of the clients who have been recipients of this counselling approach.

Timulak and Lietaer (2001) qualitatively explored the 'quality' of positive experiences of university students who had been receiving person-centred counselling. The researchers used interviews together with either audio or video recordings of the counselling sessions. During the interviews, when the clients (three male and three female) described particular moments from their sessions (which they perceived to be positive) they were asked to locate it on the recording and replay it for the researcher. The two major findings were the clients' feelings of empowerment and a sense of safety. According to the researchers, the responses of the clients indicated that their experiences of empowerment encapsulated a sense of 'wholeness' indicating that the clients were not just moving forward in one aspect of their lives but rather they felt that their whole lives were moving in a direction of larger internal empowerment. This sense of empowerment was further strengthened when the clients were given the ability to negotiate their own therapy because through this process they felt that their counsellors had given up their power and allowed the client to be more involved. Their counsellors' self-disclosure was also experienced as empowering because through this they felt

assured that their counsellor would not have any prejudice against them. Their reports of feeling a sense of safety in the counsellors' presence indicates the power of the 'therapeutic bond' they shared with their counsellors and this sense of safety was also a possible indication of their preparedness to fruitfully engage in therapy (Timulak & Lietaer, 2001).

The clients in Timulak and Lietaer's study also reported experiencing their relationship with the counsellor as a 'secure base' from which they felt confident to explore and confront their anxieties. The role of the counsellor was also reported as being catalytic because in his or her presence the clients were able to 'unfold' their personal meanings of the events in their lives. The clients reported being much more aware of the things they revealed, how they were connected and also what kind of feelings were evoked from this sense of awareness. Although the clients did not report much of this awareness back to their counsellors during the sessions, they agreed while being interviewed by the researchers that they only achieved it because of the presence and support of their counsellor (Timulak and Lietaer, 2001).

Rosanne Knox (2008) explored experiences of 'relational depth' among clients who had undergone person-centred therapy using semi-structured interviews. Relational depth is a state of profound contact and engagement between two people in which each person is fully real with the other and is able to understand and value the experiences of others at a high level (Mearns & Cooper, 2005). Participants in Knox's research reported a wide array of emotional responses to their therapists and the process of person-centred therapy. Some participants described a sense of 'slowing down' or delving deeper when discussing the intensity of emotional experiencing and self-understanding. Almost all participants described feeling safe and reported feeling a sense of 'flow' with their therapist. This means that they felt they could be open with their therapists and 'let their therapist in', most also reported being aware of their vulnerability during these moments but they were not perturbed by it. These experiences culminated for most in a sense of self-worth and validation, with some of the clients even describing feelings of self-acceptance and empowerment (Knox, 2008).

McMillan and McLeod's (2006) research within person-centred counselling has focused on the sense of 'connection' between the client and counsellor. Using semi-structured interviews these researchers explored the quality of the client-counsellor

relationship among therapists who had undergone at least two episodes of person-centred counselling. They indicated that many clients in person-centred therapy felt a special connection with their therapist right from the first interaction and hence made a decision to 'give themselves over to the relationship'. Another striking finding from this research was that some clients described their therapists as ideal parents. They did not compare the therapist to their real parents but had created an image of a 'wished for parent' who provided a profound sense of safety, being cared for, loved, understood and supported. According to McMillan and McLeod (2006) these qualities were what the clients were looking for to feel comfortable in their relationship. In reporting this finding it should also be acknowledged that the participants in this research were all trained psychotherapists who were chosen because of their ability to sensitively observe their experiences in therapy. Regular clients may not have described this experience in exactly these words. I describe these findings here because they align with my experience and the literature on the importance of the therapeutic relationship.

Even within the field of diagnosed psychological conditions, the use of client-centred counselling has yielded some encouraging findings. The use of person-centred counselling was been found to be of use with women who were diagnosed with alcohol addiction (Lillie, 2002). It was postulated that these women at some point in their lives were subjected to conditions that made them feel unworthy and this led to their dependence on alcohol. Thus person-centred counselling was offered to help them deal with their addiction (Lillie, 2002). While the results did not demonstrate the women giving up their addiction, all of them reported feeling more confident in themselves and their capabilities and were also able to proudly own their feelings and their addiction – which were regarded as essential towards reaching a stage of sobriety (Walitzer & Sher, 1996; Lillie, 2002).

Stephen et al (2011) conducted a case study on a client who was suffering from social anxiety (a debilitating psychological condition) and recommended to undergo 20 sessions of person-centred therapy. The case was evaluated by three independent judges to ensure its reliability and validity. Post-therapy, the client reported many positive changes in her life including her awareness of and acceptance of her own difficulties, and seeing more people socially. Having opened up emotionally, she was able to feel more vulnerable and less ashamed and was even able to manage a difficult relationship with one of her colleagues (Stephen et al, 2011). The three judges after evaluating the

case and the post-session data concluded that the client did show a considerable improvement and that the counselling sessions contributed to this improvement. But the judges also acknowledged that the client's previous experience of therapy, her motivation and her willingness to engage in the therapeutic process were also contributors to her improvement and all these factors are listed by Willutzki and Koban (2004) as predictors to positive outcomes in therapy.

Marchant and Payne (2002) explored the relevance of person-centred counselling with women who were undergoing treatment to overcome anorexia nervosa. The women were all adults who had completed at least eight sessions of person-centred counselling sessions on more than one occasion – either privately or through a health clinic. The data for this research was sourced through informal interviews. The women reported that their relationship with their counsellor was of paramount importance and it was found that their counsellor's honesty and openness facilitated an understanding of and recovery from their eating disorder. The women also reported that it was the warm and respectful way in which their treatment plan was presented to them that made them feel that their treatment was not a punishment. These women also found that being listened to was far more beneficial than when they were directed to think in a cognitive way about their condition by previous health practitioners. It was determined that these factors facilitated their engagement in the counselling process (Mearns & Thorne, 2000; Marchant & Payne, 2002).

Based on the evidence provided above it can be argued that person-centred counselling has a therapeutic potency and is worth investigating. My goal during the sessions I offered was not to do some activity 'on' my clients but rather let them talk about things which were on their mind and let them see new possibilities or come up with new perspectives. During my review of literature on this approach to counselling I did not identify any research that had assessed the benefit of this approach with young clients or clients with refugee backgrounds. This gap in the literature could be addressed to some extent by the findings of my research. Finally, my training as a counsellor has been of the person-centred orientation and this meant that I could facilitate the counselling sessions without any external assistance. Hence, it was decided that this would be the counselling approach that would inform and direct the counselling sessions I would be offering my participants.

Engaging young clients in counselling

The section below looks briefly at some of the counselling literature pertaining to younger clients, in particular how youth perceive and respond to counselling services. Understanding clients' perspectives on counselling also enables the counsellors (in this case me) to engage more effectively with the clients (Claveirole, 2004; Carey et al, 2007; Binder et al, 2009). The literature in this section provides some information about the methods that have been indicated to be successful while engaging youth in counselling and also some of the factors that needed to be considered while planning and conducting this research.

Existing literature on counselling youth suggests that young people have very definite opinions on what they want from counselling (Gibson & Cartwright, 2014) yet engaging young people in counselling is often a problematic process (Westergaard, 2013). Binder et al (2008) found that young adults frequently change their minds about engaging with a therapy and Kazdin (1996) confirmed that the dropout rate in therapy is particularly high for young people.

Nonetheless, there is a reasonable number of young people who do successfully enter into and engage in therapy and counselling and these youths have indicated that they are just looking for opportunities to talk about and express their emotions (Dunne et al, 2000). Other young clients have indicated that their need is to have a space that assures them confidentiality and where they can be listened to with a kind and caring attitude, and at the same time be treated as individuals without being patronised or judged (Freake et al, 2007). The provision of a 'safe space' in the counselling relationship involves not only the process of counselling but also the physical environment where the counselling takes place (Spurling, 2004; Green, 2010; Westergaard, 2013). Some young people who do not feel safe in their surroundings may view the counselling room with anxiety and fear (Quinn & Chan, 2009). Westergaard (2013) has found that young clients perceive counsellors' premises that are bright, clean, with soft music playing in the waiting area, decorated with artwork by local youth as serene, non-threatening and respectful. This literature informed the methods of selecting the premises as well as the factors that served to put my clients at ease will be discussed in the methods chapter.

The second part of the 'safe space' in counselling refers to the boundaries – behavioural, ethical and legal, in the counselling relationship (Daniels & Jenkins, 2010). While providing confidentiality is mandatory it is also important for counsellors to make their clients aware that there are limits to the level of confidentiality that can be provided. Counsellors who work with younger clients state that the establishment of these boundaries is essential so that the psychological and physical well-being of the clients are not compromised (Daniels & Jenkins, 2010; Westergaard, 2013).

Flexibility and creativity are two additional criteria that counsellors working with young clients recommend to successfully engage them in counselling. Flexibility refers to counsellors being open to accessing a range of counselling according to the needs of their client (Westergaard, 2013). Counsellors are recommended to acknowledge the uniqueness of each of their clients and strive to provide them responses that are unique to their needs – rather than providing the same set of responses to all clients (Feltham, 2010; Mumby, 2011). These researchers also suggest that counsellors need to be creative in their approach so as to be able to 'draw' their clients out. The best way to do this often to venture into the 'world' of the client by engaging them in topics of their interest before addressing the problems that brought them into counselling (Westergaard, 2013).

Another paramount concern for most young people when they enter counselling is that they find a therapist with whom they can relate and who respects their emerging sense of independence and autonomy (Dunne et al, 2000; Binder et al, 2011; Gibson & Cartwright, 2014). Some youth counsellors have postulated that these conditions can be maintained through the counselling relationship. Respecting client's needs emerge from believing what they say – even if all they tell is lies. Because if clients perceive that their counsellor can handle the lies they tell it might eventually lead them to trust their counsellors with the truth (Westergaad, 2013).

Accessing young clients' experiences of counselling can prove to be challenging particularly owing to the inequalities of power between an adult researcher and young clients (Claveirole, 2004). Many young people have difficulty trusting relationships with adults and very often adults appear to respond to young people from a position that lacks understanding (Taransaud, 2011). Young people will only be able to engage with an adult counsellor if they have established a relationship based on trust.

However, this does not imply that establishing a positive counselling relationship with young people is straightforward (Lynass et al, 2012). Despite the relatively small age difference between me and my clients (as compared to that described in the literature) these recommendations were helpful while planning and carrying out my research.

Gibson and Cartwright (2014) conducted a narrative inquiry with 22 young clients between the ages of 16 and 18 years who were receiving counselling services through their schools that were based in Auckland, New Zealand. The clients' descriptions of their experiences in counselling indicated that they found the service to be transformative, supportive, pragmatic or disappointing. The clients who reported that counselling was transformative experienced a positive change in themselves because of the counselling. These changes included the ability to trust others, to appreciate themselves, perform better at social roles and being able to display their emotions openly. Those who described counselling as being supportive acknowledged the process as a continuous lifeline that helped them keep functioning even when faced with high levels of emotional distress. These clients did not indicate that they expected much from counselling apart from having a caring counsellor who would support them through their emotional challenges. While these clients reported that the counselling sessions were a valuable source of support, none of them reported any lasting positive changes within the self (Gibson & Cartwright, 2014).

Some clients in Gibson and Cartwright's study reported obtaining only pragmatic benefits from going to counselling. They described the counselling process as a short term intervention that was designed to meet a particular need in their lives at that time. The positive outcome for these clients was the resolution of the specific problem for which they sought guidance rather than any profound personal change. The remaining young clients who reported being disappointed by the counselling indicated that they started the process with difficulties, which remained unchanged even after the process ended. The findings from Gibson and Cartwright's study revealed that even young clients play an active role in giving shape to their experience of counselling (Duncan et al, 2007; Gibson & Cartwright, 2014). The diverse experiences that the clients had with the process challenges the view that young people are a homogenous group who all have the same needs when they come to counselling (Freake et al, 2007; Gibson & Cartwright, 2014).

Johanna Cormack (2009) conducted qualitative research using focus groups and presented the views of a group of marginalised young homeless people on counselling. The clients in Cormack's (2009) study did not report any concern over any particular attributes of their counsellor but most of them reported a strong dislike of the counselling process and at the root of it was the fact that for most of them going to counselling was not a choice. Their trust in the counsellor as a person and in the process of counselling was low and this finding was not surprising given that this group of young people had previously been let down by both their families and the system multiple times (Cormack, 2009). According to Cormack (2009) it is important with such clients to allow the helping relationship to develop slowly so that trust can be facilitated over time. Expecting these young people to accept that the counsellor is trustworthy right at the outset is quite a heavy demand. To counter these clients' dislike of the counselling process, Cormack recommended that clients should be given the right to determine if they wished to attend counselling or not. Another finding from Cormack's study was that young people reported wanting some lively and fun activities in the counselling sessions and would have been more open to speaking to a counsellor over a coffee or while going for a long walk (Cormack, 2009).

Cormack's findings provide some useful guidelines for initiating and sustaining counselling sessions with young clients especially when it is noted that refugee youth are also a marginalised section of society (Correa-Velez et al, 2010). I used these guidelines to help direct the manner in which I accessed research participants, invited their participation, acknowledged their previous experiences with health professionals, and gave them time to open up and discuss as much as they are comfortable with, without any pressure.

The findings in this section also reminded me that even though all the clients in my thesis were to be offered counselling sessions of the person-centred orientation, I should be constantly aware of my counselling techniques (eg – prodding and paraphrasing) and be ready to either discontinue or reconsider the techniques that seemed to be inappropriate.

While this literature pertains to youth, it does not include refugee youth. In the next section, therefore, I will present some research findings on therapeutic interventions with people of refugee backgrounds.

Counselling and Psychotherapy with refugees

Counsellors who work with refugees and former refugees have noted that refugees are more receptive to therapeutic interventions once their basic, practical and safety needs have been suitably met (Yule, 2002; Warr, 2010). Former refugees who are referred to mental health services commonly ask that matters involving their food, housing and safety be looked after before their therapy can begin (Warr, 2010). In this section, I will describe some of the recommendations made by counsellors and psychotherapists who work with former refugees.

I – Understanding the experience of forced migration

According to Yakushko et al (2008) while working with clients who have refugee backgrounds, health professionals need always to acknowledge that refugee clients could possibly be struggling with issues to various degrees. These issues mostly concern the loss of their homes and acculturation to their host country and many former refugees may be dealing with a complex web of issues related to the circumstances that lead to their being "pushed out" of their home countries (Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2009; Yakushko et al, 2008). Before the process of relocation, refugees may have witnessed traumatic events in their home countries, experienced severe oppression and persecution and felt a strong sense of despair and loss for a home country to which returning may be impossible (Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2009). It is thus important that a professional dealing with them understands that difficulties encountered by refugee clients may have begun long before the actual relocation event (Hays & Erford, 2009).

Furthermore, counsellors and psychotherapists need to have some understanding about experiences of persecution, violence and flight into exile which are typical experiences of refugee populations (Blackwell, 2005). It is also important to acknowledge that while many refugees will have profound needs and may need a good deal of help in the initial stages of their settlement, refugees are also people with personal resources and are capable of rebuilding their own lives and making a fruitful contribution to the society in which they have settled (Blackwell, 2005).

II – Understanding the specific needs of refugee clients

The relationship of the refugee clients with their counsellor is as vital as that of non-refugee clients. Very often former refugees do not discuss upsetting events with family members in order to protect them from these 'awful' memories. People outside the family might not be perceived as trustworthy irrespective of whether they are from the homeland or from the new host community and hence the counsellor may be the only one whom the client feels able to trust and talk (Blackwell, 2005). Stedman (1999) has observed that counsellors who provide services to former refugees need to place their service in the wider socio-economic and political context that has affected their clients because most former refugees have had to become adept at analysing situations and scrutinising people in order to survive. This hypervigilance will have direct implications for building trust in the therapeutic relationship (Stedman, 1999).

Griffiths (2001) points out that it is important for counsellors to be perceived as people who understand specific experiences and counsellors need to make the effort to comprehend the refugees' experience and convey this understanding effectively, and if not, then this could affect the counselling relationship. Within my research this will take the form of my being well informed over the flight of the Bhutanese refugees from Bhutan and their series of unsuccessful negotiations to gain entrance into Nepal. The art will lie in being able to convey some understanding of their past circumstances and at the same time not revealing too many details so that the clients perceive themselves as adding to my understanding of their lives. Since this will probably be the first experience of counselling for the clients, care also needs to be taken to proceed at their pace and not prod them towards revealing more than they are comfortable to.

Griffiths (2001) has noted that refugees in the early phases of their resettlement have a need to recount their journey even without being asked, which suggests a possible need to have their position witnessed and validated by an outsider. Even refugees who come from highly publicised conflict areas can end up feeling like mere statistics or pictures on a television screen (Blackwell, 2005). Papadopoulos (2002) used the term 'therapeutic witnessing' for this because he believed that refugee clients need their therapists to be a witness to their stories and believe them. The nature of this approach is not to question the clients but to listen to their experiences. In the unconditional presence of the counsellor, refugees can begin to reconnect with the

disparate parts of their traumatic experiences and create a new narrative where they can position themselves in a new context (Papadopoulos, 2002). This approach is widely used following major traumatic events in an attempt to reduce the psychological symptoms that follow (Rose et al, 2002).

The above findings from the literature lent support to my decision to work from the person-centred approach. The theory of person-centred counselling suggests that counsellors do not question but rather should listen to the stories of their clients to provide them with validation. I decided that following this approach would enable me to act as witness to my clients' experiences.

Some therapists who work with former refugees have pointed out that their clients have been through a wide array of experiences at three major levels – pre – migration, migration and post-migration (Rutter, 2001; Fazel & Stein, 2002; Warr, 2010). These therapists have observed that it is important to take into consideration the different stages and levels of resettlement stress that their clients have been through. In keeping with this view, Yakushko et al (2008) suggest that it is important to acknowledge that younger refugees have experienced these stressful episodes with varying levels of severity (Yakushko et al, 2008). Understanding the severity of the clients' stressors facilitates better understanding of the clients' life circumstances and can also guide the therapist in facilitating better counselling outcomes for them (Warr, 2010).

Other researchers have postulated that while working with former refugees – particularly the younger ones, it is fruitful not to focus solely on the traumatic content of the clients' stories (Blackwell, 2005). Because even though these clients may have been witness to trauma they are capable of simultaneously possessing enormous strength and coping strategies – which need to be acknowledged (Hodes, 2002; Blackwell, 2005; Yakushko et al, 2008). Contemporary therapists are advocating achieving a balance with their clients with regards to dealing with traumatic incidents and recalling positive memories. This way of working fosters the consideration of the clients' whole experience and encouraging a sense of empowerment rather than only focusing on a victims' trauma (Losi, 2002; Warr, 2010). It has been suggested that focusing on the positive memories along with traumatic ones can aid the client in mastering their distress rather than increasing it (Yule, 2002).

It has also been highlighted in the literature that the timing for these types of interventions also needs to be carefully considered so as to avoid re-traumatizing the individual. In cases like these it is best to be guided by the refugee client and allow him/her to regulate the degree of exposure to their traumatic memories (Rose et al, 2002; Mayou et al, 2000, Griffiths, 2001). This guideline also complements person-centred counselling. The clients alone determine the direction of each session and even while discussing disturbing or negative feelings it is the clients who decide how much they are going to disclose without any influence from the counsellor. Blackwell (2005) supported this observation when he noticed that his clients were effectively reducing the frequency of their sessions from weekly to every alternate week and then once a month. Upon reflection, they concluded that this was possibly as much as the clients could tolerate remembering and revisiting painful memories that once a week was too much. They needed a longer recovery period and sufficient time to live in the present before again revisiting their past (Blackwell, 2005).

III – Being sensitive to issues of race and ethnicity

Another aspect that counsellors working with refugees need to be aware of is their cultural transition (Blackwell, 2005). Refugees do not occupy one culture, they occupy at least two – the one they left, and the one they have arrived in. The cultural issues they may present to the counsellor are very often sharply defined. Refugees may also cling to aspects of the culture from which they have been separated in a particularly tenacious way, which could involve freezing their original culture in their minds at the time they left and failing to acknowledge how it might have evolved. Thus they remain loyal to a culture that no longer exists in the contemporary reality (Blackwell, 2005).

According to Papadopoulos and Hildebrand (1997) it is a challenge for the refugee's counsellor to recognize these cultural positions and help them facilitate integration. Bruner (1990) found the use of narratives to be particularly helpful with refugee clients to build bridges between their old and new cultural identities. Griffiths (2001) observed that some of the refugee clients who underwent counselling started expressing a need to help those who got left behind in the homeland and this was sometimes accompanied by survivor guilt. The need for psychological safety in the

sessions while such sensitive processes are being explored is paramount. And it is the counsellor's responsibility to facilitate the necessary psychological space where the client can assimilate and accommodate their past and current experiences (Griffiths, 2001).

When considering the cultural aspect, therapists working with refugee clients also need to consider how the client perceives counselling and psychotherapy. Tribe (2002) observed that although western cultures acknowledge the benefits of being able to talk about their problems, many non-western cultures consider it inappropriate to talk about details of their personal lives. Many researchers have documented that some refugee clients do not consider talking about a problem beneficial either because such practices do not exist in their cultures or because revealing their thoughts may be perceived as a sign of weakness or failure (Bemak et al, 2002; Tribe, 2002; Warr, 2010). In such cases the counsellor will have to spend time talking about the concept and process of counselling with their clients before addressing the actual presenting problem

The ethnic background of the counsellor is also of significance in terms of projecting an awareness of the refugee's culture and regarding the political stance of the culture the counsellor is seen to represent (Griffiths, 2001). Therapists who choose to work with refugees do so because they generally have some cultural or racial experiences that are shared with the clients (Eleftheriadou, 1999). A counsellor who was a refugee may be perceived as more able to understand the extreme experiences of the client and this is a potent therapeutic dynamic. On the other hand a counsellor who is from an ethnic background that were 'the oppressors' or allied to the oppressors in the refugees home country would create heavy resistance in the sessions. Another factor to be considered is the position of the counsellor as an authority figure of the host country in the context of the counselling relationship (Griffiths, 2001; Blackwell, 2005). This literature was helpful for me to consider the issues of culture and ethnicity pertinent to my research. In the methods chapter, I describe how these were appropriately addressed.

IV - Acknowledging the impact of expectations on counselling process and outcomes

An additional factor that needs to be considered in counselling are the expectations that clients have about what is going to happen in the sessions, because these expectations influence the outcomes of the counselling process (Greenberg et al, 2006; Westra et al, 2010). While there is little research on this topic (Weinberger & Eig, 1999; Westra et al, 2010), counselling psychologists have theorized that the expectations that a client brings into the counselling sessions are a major determinant of the success of therapy (Apfelbaum, 1958; Tinsley and Barich, 1994; Seligman et al, 2009). An unrealistically low or unrealistically high expectation about the counsellor's expertise and the conditions facilitating counselling has been found to have a detrimental effect on the counselling process. On the other hand a realistic expectation from the client about their counsellor's ability and the counselling environment has been found to be helpful in facilitating positive outcomes in the counselling process (Tinsley and Barich, 1994).

Existing research with young clients suggests that only a few know what to expect from their counselling sessions or their counsellor (Watsford et al, 2013). A significant number of young people expected that their sessions would simply involve 'talking' to a therapist. While this is the case for some forms of counselling (e.g. person-centred) it is not the case for others (e.g. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy). Other findings indicate that when clients feel 'pressured' to attend therapy it is detrimental to their levels of engagement and treatment effectiveness (Westra & Dozois, 2006; McMurran & Ward, 2010). Young clients have also reported that their subsequent engagement with counselling services will depend on how well they perceive their first few sessions – which highlights the importance of establishing a good rapport with the client is (Watsford et al, 2013).

Section III – Mindfulness

"If someone comes along and shoots an arrow into your heart, it's fruitless to stand there and yell at the person. It would be much better to turn your attention to the fact that there's an arrow in your heart..."

- Pema Chödrön

One of the few quotes that capture mindfulness with some justice is the one above that has been borrowed from a renowned Buddhist Nun whose books are popular with a wide range of audiences. It captures a core element of mindfulness practice, which is turning attention to and completely noticing what is happening inside oneself.

As a counsellor who has also practiced mindfulness it was my endeavour to offer it to my clients along with the counselling sessions. Some practitioners may regard it as controversial but my personal experience along with the emerging literature indicates optimistic outcomes for clients when counsellors use mindfulness alongside regular therapy. The current section presents a brief history of and explores the literature around mindfulness and its therapeutic value.

A brief history of mindfulness

Mindfulness has its roots in eastern religious traditions, specifically in ancient Buddhist teachings. The concept worth mentioning at this point is the Four Noble truths of Buddhism as the essence of mindfulness practices arise directly from them. The Four Noble truths state that: 1- suffering is ubiquitous, 2- suffering is the consequence of the automatic tendency to cling to phenomena, 3- the cessation of suffering is possible, 4- this cessation can be achieved by practicing the Eightfold Path (Kumar, 2003). While a full discussion of the eightfold path is not necessary in this chapter, it is worth mentioning that some of the aspects included in the path are; engaging in understanding, conception, speech action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration (Harvey, 2000). Among these concepts the path of mindfulness has received a great deal of attention in psychological practice.

Mindfulness, as referred to in the ancient texts of Buddhism is an English translation of the Pali word *'sati'* which connotes awareness, attention and remembering. According to Siegel et al (2009) just the act of becoming 'aware' of what is occurring within and around us can help begin the process of untangling ourselves from our mental preoccupations. Buddhist scholar John Dunne (2007) notes that mindfulness means more than passive awareness, it means actively working with our states of mind in order to abide peacefully in the midst of whatever happens.

As mindfulness is currently being adopted by Western psychotherapeutic practices it is gradually migrating away from its ancient roots and hence its meaning is expanding as well. The most notable inclusions to the scope of mindfulness beyond *sati* are qualities like non judgment, acceptance and compassion. There is currently no one single definition of mindfulness. Different authors have proposed different definitions that are in line with their practice. Below are some of the definitions that have been found in relevant literature.

"Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally" - Kabat-Zinn (1990)

"The state of being attentive to and aware of what is taking place in the present" – Brown and Ryan (2003)

"Bringing one's attention to the internal and external experiences occurring in the present moment" – Baer (2003)

"The phenomenon of standing back from negative thoughts and feelings to evaluate an experience" - Crane and Williams (2010)

"The capacity to maintain awareness of and openness to current experience, including internal mental states and impinging aspects of the external world without judgement and with acceptance" – Briere and Scott (2013)

There are two components that constitute the present day conception of mindfulness and that have been discussed in the literature - an open attention to one's present experience and a nonjudgmental, accepting attitude toward whatever one encounters (Bishop et al, 2004). It is also important to distinguish between mindfulness and concentration, as training with the latter is not being offered as part of this thesis.

Concentration is a process where-in "we rest the mind in a single object of awareness". The aim of this process is to achieve single pointedness so if attention should stray it is redirected to that object (Epstein, 2004). Whereas, mindfulness is just the act of paying attention to something (eg breathing or sounds coming from outdoors) and not necessarily in a pointed way.

Another component of mindfulness that has been proposed in contemporary literature is 'meta-awareness'. Meta-awarenesss basically means a state of awareness where a person is aware of the cognitions attached to their thinking but they are in a state where their cognitions are not 'infected' with any emotion (Khong, 2011). This means that the awareness of thought processes that is generated through mindfulness practices do not in themselves produce any anxiety or stress in the person practicing it. By being meta-aware the mindfulness practitioner develops a connection with the processes occurring within themselves without the desire to engage with the resulting emotions and thought processes (Khong, 2011).

A commonality running across all the definitions is the act of being attentive and aware. Much as the outcome advocated by each practitioner varies, the process of being attentive remains the same. The aim of the mindfulness sessions offered as part of this research was to encourage participants to pay attention to themselves and what was going on in their immediate environment with complete attention and without any judgement, as this is consitent with my practice of mindfulness over the years and is also consistent with the general body of literature on mindfulness research. Hence the preferred definition of mindfulness for this thesis will be the one by Kabat-Zinn (1990) because it espouses the process that I offered.

Before exploring the literature on the therapeutic impacts of mindfulness it is imperative to acknowledge that there are also a number of important misconceptions to define and discuss, for two reasons – the first is so that the reader can understand what mindfulness is not, and the second is to outline my perception of the mindfulness process. These misconceptions also serve to alert future researchers to the fact that their target populations may have misconceptions about mindfulness as a process. I have briefly explored some of the common misconceptions of mindfulness below.

First many people believe that mindfulness is a form of religion and is usually based on misunderstood notions about Eastern philosophy and Buddhist religions

(Walser & Westrup, 2007). Some practioners may have certain goals (such as enlightenment) but it should be stressed that these are not necessarily linked to religion. While mindfulness has its roots in Buddhist teachings it should not be regarded as a form of Buddhism or as a form of any religion (Walter & Westrup, 2007; Siegal et al, 2009).

A second misconception is that mindfulness is a form of hypnosis (Gunaratana & Gunaratana, 2011). Some clients feel that the goal of mindfulness is to create a trancelike state where one can be manipulated. On the contrary, the goal of mindfulness is to help the client be present in the moment, to experience and to be aware (Walter and Westrup, 2007).

A third misconception is that mindfulness is designed to be a form of relaxation (Walser & Westrup, 2007). While some people find mindfulness to be relaxing, there are others who find it to be anxiety producing especially at times when asked to observe thoughts that can bring about anxiety. Clients may or may not feel relaxed after participating in a mindfulness exercise, and when they do the counsellors usually remind them that relaxation is a by-product of the experience and not a goal. A fourth misconception of mindfulness involves mystical notions (Walser & Westrup, 2007). Some persons see mindfulness as some magical practice where individuals are placed into a kind of alternate realm. Practitioners of mindfulness (myself included) stress that there is nothing magical about mindfulness, it is simply a way to be present and experience – nothing more, nothing less.

A fifth misconception about mindfulness is that it may be a dangerous process (Walser & Westrup, 2007). This misconception springs from the ideas that encountering negative and unpleasant emotions have a negative impact on the client. Mindfulness is designed for people to be aware in the moment and to be present to the ongoing experience which is in itself not dangerous but considered to be beneficial. Mindfulness is not intended to confront negative internal content purposefully but to notice it if it shows up just as one would notice other internal content (Walser & Westrup, 2007).

Finally, some people mistakenly think mindfulness is a ‘quick fix’ to their problems and that if they practice mindfulness for a short period of time then they will no longer have difficult emotions and thoughts (Gunaratana & Gunaratana, 2002,

2011). Practitioners of mindfulness have stressed that mindfulness is a process and not an outcome, there will always be another negative feeling to be felt or a difficult memory to be had.

Exploring these misconceptions about mindfulness serves to direct some awareness towards their existence and be aware that they might influence the way my clients experience mindfulness. My clients for this thesis will be predominantly Hindu or Buddhist so it is quite possible that owing to their spiritual beliefs, when introduced to a concept like mindfulness, they might not understand what is being offered to them. It is a requirement to clarify to the clients right at the beginning what exactly is being offered in the sessions.

The Therapeutic Impact of Mindfulness

Meditative practices have long traditions and significant implications for many clinical interventions and have been postulated to facilitate therapeutic processes similar to other mainstream psychotherapies (Martin, 2002; Teasdale et al, 2002; Sugiura & Sugiura, 2015). Jon Kabat Zinn was one of the first known scholars to integrate mindfulness into Western practices. According to him, it is the attitude with which one undertakes mindfulness that is the core of the experience and will (to a large extent) determine its long-term value to the person (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Jon Kabat-Zinn's technique of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) which is a blend of mindfulness meditation and yoga has consistently proven to alleviate stress and chronic physical pain (Kabat-Zinn et al, 1986).

In the last 30 years, many counselling practitioners and researchers have been incorporating mindfulness into their therapeutic work (Brown et al, 2013). Siegel (2011) reported that in a survey completed by 2,600 therapists, 41 per cent reported that they integrated some form of mindfulness into their therapy. Research on mindfulness-based interventions have findings that support the use of these interventions to reduce many forms of psychological distress including generalized anxiety disorder, depression, depressive relapse, anger and parasuicidal behaviour (Kabat-Zinn et al, 1992; Kumar et al, 2008; Ma & Teasdale, 2004; Linehan et al, 2004). Anxiety and

depression have been the two prime psychological distresses on which mindfulness training has had a positive influence (Hoffmann et al, 2012).

Existing literature has suggested that mindfulness-based intervention (MBIs) can be used to enhance the effectiveness of most traditional talk therapies (Brown et al, 2013). The goal of MBIs is not to change the client's beliefs and feelings, but rather to change the client's relationship to these phenomena. It has also been documented that since mindfulness produces levels of attention that are deeper and free from distortions, this level of attention stimulates an individual to observe circumstances as they occur naturally rather than engage in distorted thinking like rumination (past-oriented) or catastrophizing (future-oriented). This way of attending to ones circumstances in turn leads an individual to cope with them in adaptive ways rather than avoidant ones thereby increasing the potency of MBI's (Baer et al, 2006; Shapiro et al, 2007).

Other researchers have demonstrated that mindfulness has a buffering effect on people when they experience any challenging life events (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Brown et al 2007; Weinstein et al 2009). And this attribute has been shown to predict a variety of mental health and well-being indicators (Broderick, 2012; Shapiro et al, 2007). Researchers like Sharpiro et al (2006) have postulated that the reason mindfulness practice is able to accomplish this is because it promotes a less defensive and willing exposure to threatening circumstances which in turn reduces the negative appraisals of those situations and lowers the amount of stress the individuals attribute to the circumstance (Shapiro et al, 2007). Some research has also indicated that individuals who are more mindful of their surroundings and life events are more likely to view demanding situations as less threatening – both within a laboratory and naturalistic setting (Weinstein et al, 2009).

A defining feature of mindfulness in the therapeutic realm is its metacognitive approach to being attentive to memories (Zerubavel & Messman-Moore, 2013). The metacognitive approach to understanding mindfulness states that it is a process that does not apply personal schemas or filters or even prior evaluations about an experience (Brown et al, 2007). Through this approach, the clients are encouraged to have a mindset of openness and curioisity towards their experiences even if these expereinces are uncomfortable. Clients are guided towards adopting an attitude of nonjudgment towards experienced situations, noticing and simultaneously letting go of personal

evaluations that have appraised those situations as ‘bad’ or ‘good’. Thus the metacognitive aspect of mindfulness fosters a gentle compassionate approach to experiences (rather than our habitual judgments) and this can be a therapeutic step towards dealing with painful emotions (Linehan, 2004; Germer, 2016).

A characteristic of mindful metacognitions is an acceptance of experiences as they are, rather than as one might have wished they were (Robins, 2003). Mindful acceptance must be distinguished from resignation. Acceptance is not a sense of giving up or being passive but rather it is a willingness to accept the situation as it is and then use this accepting attitude to promote a change (Segal et al, 2012). The metacognitive aspect was introduced into psychotherapy because researchers in psychotherapy observed that in most clients it is the reactions to the feelings that are distressful rather than the feelings themselves (Brown et al, 2007; Roemer & Orsillo, 2010; Zerubavel & Messman-Moore, 2013). The practice of mindfulness has been found to be helpful in altering the patterns of emotional reactivity and avoidance which in turn can ease the distressing feelings of a client following an intense experience (Roemer & Orsillo, 2009).

Another characteristic of the mindfulness process from the therapeutic perspective, is the mental processes that emerge within the individual from practicing mindfulness. These processes are termed as ‘Emergent Processes’ because they are not taught directly but rather emerge experientially through practicing directly taught mindfulness components (Robins, 2003; Sharpiro et al, 2006; Zerubavel & Messman-Moore, 2013). There are four emergent processes that are offered in the mindfulness literature – reperceiving, inherent wisdom, connectedness and dialectical thinking

Reperceiving is a process through which an individual experiences a shift in attention from the content of an experience to the process of the experience (Keng et al, 2011). Shapiro et al (2006) conceptualize this process as a tranformation in thought that allows the subject of thought to become the object. The benefit of this process is that it has the potential to bring insights such as the impermanence of emotions thereby leading the individual to become less aroused by the intensity of the experience. The second emergent process of mindfulness is inherent wisdom and this refers to a process through which the answer to a problem suddenly emerges or unfolds in an intuitive manner (Segal et al, 2012). Through this process clients may become increasingly

aware of their goals and values and also start behaving in ways that reflect their goals and values (Shapiro et al, 2006; Brown & Ryan, 2003). The third emergent process of the practice of mindfulness is a sense of connectedness (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). This sense of connectedness may manifest as a deep connection with nature, other individuals or even the universe. Through this perspective an individual may define his existence in relation to others (Robins, 2003). The final emergent process is called dialectical thinking (Linehan, 1993) which is also sometimes referred to as psychological flexibility (Hayes & Feldman, 2004). This process discourages thinking in terms of extremes and instead fosters considering both sides of a situation simultaneously. This process encourages a person to understand a situation holistically rather than with a limited perspective (Zerubavel & Messman-Moore, 2013). All these processes have their own therapeutic worth, however it should be noted that learning mindfulness does not mean that a person will develop all the emergent processes at once but rather might have the tendency to develop the one that will facilitate the resolution of his/her situation at that time.

Apart from this some researchers have established that even the simple practice of observing oneself with a nonjudgmental, accepting attitude toward one's experience can create a state of emotional nonreactivity which in turn is healing in itself (Chodron, 2002). Martin (2002) highlighted that the ability to take a step back from one's internal processes with an inner posture of nonattachment, non identification and acceptance can actually lead to a state of 'psychological freedom'(Martin, 2002). It has even been proposed that for clients with less severe concerns or non-pathological problems, basic mindfulness interventions may be all that is needed for them to successfully deal with the issues which brought them into counselling (Brown et al, 2013).

Mindfulness and Emotion Regulation

The regulation and acceptance of emotions has been found to be another positive outcome of practicing mindfulness, hence some literature on this topic has been presented below.

Emotional regulation refers to the process of modulating one or more aspects of an emotional experience (Campos & Sternberg, 1981; Gross 1998; Chambers et al, 2015). The process of regulation occurs at different points during the emotional experience and has the potential to influence how often the emotion is expressed, how long it is expressed for and also how well it is expressed (Gross, 2007). The inappropriate regulation of emotions has been associated with maladaptive conditions like anxiety (Rottenberg & Gross, 2007) and dysfunctional attitudes (Segal et al, 1999) and excessive rumination (Treynor et al, 2003). Even attempting to alter or avoid an emotional experience – referred to as experiential avoidance (Hayes & Wilson, 1994) has been linked with debilitating psychological conditions like depression (Hayes, 2003; Whelton, 2004).

The literature on emotions and the regulation of emotions has also indicated that when emotions are treated with nonjudgmental awareness and a sense of acceptance then it results in better psychological outcomes (Hayes & Wilson, 1994; Hayes & Feldman, 2004). This suggests that mindfulness may be a more adaptive strategy in the regulation of emotions (Teasdale et al, 2000; Chambers et al, 2015). The current body of literature on mindfulness as an emotional regulation method has presented many positive indications (Teasdale et al, 2000; Chambers et al, 2009, 2015). This is primarily because the practice of mindfulness encourages altering a person's relationship with unpleasant emotions rather than avoiding them altogether (Lappalainen et al, 2007).

Chambers et al (2015) conducted a Mindfulness Based Intervention with Australian youth diagnosed with clinical depression. At the end of their intervention they concluded that mindfulness was a potent emotion-regulating strategy for the youths because after learning to modulate their experiences of emotions they reported an improvement in their levels of depression, their attitudes, and the psychological, physical and environmental dimensions of their quality of life. These findings lend support to the use of mindfulness as an emotional regulation strategy and also present important implications for mental health services (Chambers et al, 2015).

Other research on mindfulness and the regulation of emotions has indicated that higher levels of mindfulness contributes significantly to the reduction of experiencing heightened emotional reactivity, rumination and fear among individuals experiencing psychological distress (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Parent et al, 2016; McDonald et al, 2016). Researchers have attributed this reduction in emotional arousal to mindfulness because they postulate that mindfulness allows for the individual to identify an uncomfortable experience, appraise its usefulness and then work through the difficulties of it without excessively ruminating or catastrophizing about it (Parent et al, 2016; McDonald et al 2016).

Evidence for the therapeutic effects of mindfulness on accepting one's emotions comes from the work of authors like Belinda Khong. According to Khong (2011) human beings have a tendency to divide their emotions into positive and negative and the habitual tendency is to 'wish away' the negative emotions and attach ourselves to the positive ones in the hope that they will linger.

Khong has proposed that the practice of mindfulness fosters the ability of an individual to cultivate a deep respect for their emotions rather than avoid them. According to Khong, if we begin to respect our emotions then we will learn to appreciate, honour and gradually nourish them as they arise, such that each emotion is then treated as a guest that has a message to deliver rather than as an enemy to contend with. This capacity of deep appreciation towards our emotions can only be achieved when our minds are quiet because during these times we can spend time with our emotions and grasp their wider meaning. The skill of quietening the mind can be learned through mindfulness (Khong, 2011).

The use of mindfulness to honour one's emotions has been therapeutically demonstrated on a client suffering from PTSD. This client was experiencing a sense of emotional numbness and disassociation following a traumatic incident at her work place. The only way forward for that client was to experience a therapeutic integration of the experiences of her mind and body, and mindfulness was the method that was deemed appropriate for this course of treatment (Siegel, 2007, 2009). After the treatment it was found that the client gradually came to accept all that her body and mind had endured during the incident. The client also reported accepting that she might experience anxiety or some other unpleasant emotion in the future but rather than being

repulsed by it the client reported being open to managing them every time they came up (Khong, 2011). According to Siegel (2007) this client was able to experience the world through fresh eyes after learning mindfulness in therapy.

Given the perceived benefits of integrating mindfulness and counselling for people who have experienced trauma, it may be that this method of changing the relationship one has with memories might be found to be useful by the former refugee clients in this research. It is also important, however, to acknowledge that former refugees may have already established ways of coping, or have found strategies of resilience. This may influence the findings of my research in which I enable them to talk about their lives and to experience person-centred counselling and mindfulness. The following section, therefore, explores some literature on coping and resilience that may inform my research findings

Section IV – Coping and Resilience

Coping

One of the most widely adopted definitions of coping was proposed by Lazarus and Folkman in 1984 which identifies it as

"A constantly changing cognitive and behavioural effort to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person." (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)

The authors of this definition conceptualize coping as a dynamic process, which involves continuous interactions and adjustments between a person's attempt at coping and their environment. When faced with a challenging situation, individuals use either their personal (internal) resources or environmental (external) resources to help lessen the impact of stress in overcoming these difficulties (Pahud, 2008).

Hamburg and Adams (1967) have defined coping as – "all of the mechanisms utilized by an individual to meet a significant threat to his psychological stability and to enable him to function effectively." Most of the major theories of human coping have

dealt with alterations in behaviour. While this definition by Hamburg et al is very old, it still espouses the theme of contemporary definitions of coping that if a person's behaviour consists of actions that help him or her to master the situation then he is said to be coping.

According to Thoits (1995) coping efforts may be directed at the stressor itself (problem-focused strategies) or at the emotional reactions which very often accompany the stressors (emotion-focused strategies). When a person is using emotion-focused strategies, he/she seeks support from others and tries to avoid, minimize or reappraise the stressful situation. In doing so the person tries to regulate the stressful emotions. On the other hand, if a person uses problem-focused strategies it is considered to be proactive because he/she directly confronts the problem and eventually solves it. According to Lazarus (1993) it is the severity of a situation which determines if a person will choose emotion-focused or problem-focused strategies, but researchers have found that people rely on problem-focused strategies if they appraise their stressor as being amenable to change. People rely on emotion-focused strategies when they believe that nothing or almost nothing can be done to change the stressful event or if they feel that their own coping resources are insufficient (Lazarus, 1993).

However, it is also possible that emotion-focussed and problem-focussed coping strategies are not discrete phenomena but can exist on a continuum. In addition, people may not always resort to the same coping strategy for every situation they encounter. Some literature even indicates that people typically use more than one tactic when coping with any major event or ongoing strain in their life (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Stone and Neale, 1984). Thoits (1995) proposed the idea that if a person's self-esteem or perceived control is high then the person is more likely to adopt active problem-focused coping responses whereas low self-esteem is more likely to lead to avoidant or passive styles of coping. Because perceived control over life and high self-esteem have been observed to buffer the negative health effects of stress, researchers believe that these characteristics are also associated with an increase in the use of effective coping strategies (Rodin, 1986; Umberson, 1987; Thoits, 1995).

In the above section, traditional definitions and theories behind psychological coping have been presented. But the traditional views of coping have not taken into account that a person's cultural background also impacts how he/she will react to and

cope with his life situations. Another limitation of mainstream literature on coping strategies is captured by Graham's title - "Most of the subjects were white and middle class" (Graham, 1992). This is not intended to be a racially insensitive comment but rather serves to remind researchers to be sensitive of the ethnicity and socio-economic classes of their participants. In my research, for instance, the findings of research in the west as elaborated in the above section may not be very insightful while trying to understand the coping strategies used by a refugee population from a Southeast Asian country. A review of more culturally diverse literature is required to aid in the understanding of the coping methods used by the participants in this research. To address this, some literature on the cultural and ethnic factors that influence a person's coping strategies are presented in the next section.

Coping and Culture

Author Regan Gurung (2013) in his book on Health Psychology has noted that every culture has its strengths and it is important for researchers and mental health practitioners to consider the many ways in which people of different cultures cope when they have to deal with stress. Other researchers have pointed out that cultural influences can have a pivotal impact on a person's coping styles because even though coping is a universal process, one's cultural background and values can shape which coping patterns are deemed appropriate and valued in a given society (Benedict, 1946; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Marsella & Dash-Scheuer, 1988; McCarty et al, 1999).

The terms 'individualistic' and 'collectivistic' are sometimes used to describe the general orientation of cultures and these terms are also used to describe a person's coping styles in these cultures. A collectivistic culture is one that emphasizes interdependence on others in many roles and functions (Gurung, 2013). Many Asian cultures (including the Bhutanese) are considered to be collectivistic. It has also been documented that individuals from Asian cultures tend to be socialized and emphasize an interdependent 'self-construal' focus on group cohesion. Individuals with this interdependent and connected sense of self have a desire for maintaining harmony and conforming to group norms (Weisz et al, 1984; Chang et al, 1997; Morling & Fiske, 1999). Individualistic cultures on the other hand emphasize independence and reliance

on the self (Oyserman et al, 2002). Most Western cultures tend to be individualistic. People from these cultures have a desire for self-expression and congruency between their behaviours and internal attributes (Morling & Fiske, 1999; Weisz et al, 1984). It has been found that these orientations influence how their followers will cope with stress. People in collectivistic cultures use coping methods like participating in solitary activities, seeking support from family members, members of their ethnic groups or even people who have experienced similar tragedies (Gurung, 2013). Other coping strategies for this culture include forbearance, religious practices and other traditional methods of healing. Coping strategies for individualistic cultures have been found to be typically approach-based involving methods like taking a long walk or drive alone, brainstorming, emotional bluntness and even turning to drugs and alcohol (Gurung, 2013; Carver et al, 1989).

Emerging research in coping validates the above theories. Yeh et al (2006) found that in a sample of Asian American families who had lost a family member in the attack on the world trade centre in the USA, all used collectivistic coping methods to deal with the stress arising from the loss. Another study with Australian-Asian immigrants showed that coping styles can vary with acculturation and ethnic identity (Bailey & Dua, 1999). In this study it was found that the immigrants showed high levels of perceived stress and employed more collectivistic coping strategies in their first six months in Australia. But an interesting finding in this study was that with the passage of time all these Asian people started using coping styles that were the same as the other non-Asian Australians (Bailey & Dua, 1999). Although, the research presented above draws from reports of Asian immigrants rather than refugees these findings are worth considering in the context of my thesis given that the Bhutanese refugees are also from an Asian community. The following section presents literature that specifically focuses on the ways of coping of refugees.

Coping and Refugees

When referring specifically to coping strategies of resettled refugee populations, existing research suggests that refugees do not respond passively to their life events but

are able to engage with them in an active and problem solving way. Emerging research also suggests that social support, spirituality and religion are important factors that promote resilience among refugees (Schweitzer et al, 2007; Greeff & van der Merwe, 2004). Paardekooper et al (1999) interviewed Sudanese refugee children who were living either in settlements or transit camps and they then compared their narratives with children from Uganda who had not experienced flight and war. They found that the Sudanese children had fewer opportunities to use problem-focused coping owing to their circumstances of complete dependence on social aid and the bureaucracy. Hence they tended to seek refuge mostly in the company of others, wishful thinking and praying (Paardekooper et al, 1999). This finding supports the finding that a person's ways of coping are dependent on the circumstance they are in.

The role of religion appears multiple times as a prominent coping mechanism in the literature on coping of refugees (Dorais, 2007; Schweitzer et al, 2007; Benson et al, 2012; Sossou et al, 2008; Weine et al, 2005, Pahud, 2008). In the USA religion has been associated with resilience among Bosnian refugee women and has also been listed as one of the nine mechanisms used to cope with resettlement difficulties (Weine et al, 2005; Sossou et al, 2008). It has also been documented in the refugee camps in Nepal that the Bhutanese refugees have the tendency to engage in Hindu ceremonies while stressed which could indicate that Bhutanese refugees could use religion to cope with resettlement as well (Sharma & Van Ommeren, 1998; Benson et al, 2012). Benson et al's (2012) study is one of the few that sheds some light on religious practices as a coping strategy among resettled Bhutanese refugees in the USA. They hypothesized that a higher indulgence in religious practices would lead the Bhutanese refugees to report lower levels of acculturation stress, and a cross-sectional survey was used to test this hypothesis. Contrary to the expectations of the researchers it was concluded that religious coping methods produced higher levels of social and acculturation stress among the refugees. Other researchers have provided some plausible explanations for this finding. According to Beiser (2006), when refugees limit their interactions (including the religious types) to their own ethnic community it results in a 'cocooning effect' which hinders the process of acculturation. Stronger associations with one's own ethnic group may also isolate resettling refugees from the host community thereby also limiting their exposure to varieties of social support (Leslie, 1992; Beiser, 2006). Barnes & Aguilar (2007) have suggested that having a balanced social support system,

which is augmented by social services, facilitates better long-term adjustment for refugee groups.

Within Benson et al's (2012) research it is also important to acknowledge that the Bhutanese refugees who were surveyed practiced only Hinduism and Hindu religious coping methods. Authors such as Hodge (2004) have acknowledged that Hinduism is not just a religion but rather a culture that is integrated into all aspects of the lives of those who practice it. Since those refugees used their Hindu religious beliefs to cope with the stress of adjusting to life in America it can be deduced that they became more deeply committed to their Hindu culture. Their deep level of commitment to their culture would have produced higher levels of stress since they were undergoing more internal challenges as they sought to integrate their Hindu values with American culture (Benson et al, 2012).

Coping strategies of former refugees specifically in New Zealand have not been very well explored although some researchers have concluded that health providers in the country are not very well equipped to meet the mental health needs of people with refugee backgrounds (Guerin et al, 2004; Briggs & Macleod, 2006; Pahud, 2008). A study by Pahud (2008) was undertaken with adults of refugee backgrounds resettled in Christchurch and Nelson, New Zealand. Pahud interviewed 26 former refugees who came from war-torn countries about the methods that helped them overcome their past and present difficulties. Using Grounded Theory methodology Pahud proposed a framework that provided some insight into the processes that adult refugees engage in to overcome their resettlement difficulties and adjust to their new lives.

The participants in Pahud's research identified four major factors that contributed to their coping processes. The first factor was their personal resources like their sense of determination, hope, and acceptance of situations and most importantly the use of their past experiences. The participants believed that their past experiences made them acknowledge all that they had survived prior to their resettlement and thus gave them a sense of worth. Pahud also observed that her participants' pre-settlement experiences fostered certain protective factors like hope which in turn contributed to their resilience factor and led to them coping effectively during the course of their resettlement (Pahud, 2008). Goodman (2004) reported similar results with resettled Sudanese refugees in America. The participants in Pahud's research also listed their

religious practices and families as the personal resources that facilitated their coping. Religious affiliations gave the participants the opportunity to be actively involved with others and also helped them to reinforce and preserve their sense of identity. Having family members around played a key role in providing them emotional support, and for those with children, the success that the children experienced in school became an important source of satisfaction and pride (Pahud, 2008).

The second factor that the participants in Pahud's research reported as aiding in the coping with their resettlement in New Zealand was the formal support they received upon arrival particularly the financial assistance, support with housing and getting their children enrolled in school. However, while the participants reported that formal support aided their coping upon arrival they also reported disappointment at the loss of resettlement support after the first year of their resettlement. This loss of formal support after the first year was perceived by most participants as their social inclusion needs being ignored (Pahud, 2008). The third factor observed to facilitate former refugees' coping with resettlement in Pahud's research was the presence of caring volunteers. The participants reported that these volunteers displayed empathy, encouraged them, treated them as equals and gave them chances to use and demonstrate their skills. The participants also acknowledged that interacting with the volunteers gave them the opportunity to extend their social networks in New Zealand (Pahud, 2008). This finding demonstrates the benefits of 'informal' support received in the new host country as compared to the formal support described previously.

The final factor that was proposed by Pahud (2008) as a factor that contributes to positive coping among former refugees was their personal achievements. Under personal achievements the participants listed mainly their being able to gain meaningful employment and being reunited with their family members who were left behind in the countries which they took refuge from. The participants who were employed described that their work provided them opportunities to mix and learn from the New Zealanders and to demonstrate their capacities when facing racial stereotypes (Pahud, 2008). The participants who had been reunited with family members reported that they felt capable to solve their problems because their families upheld their sense of responsibility, preserved their pride and enabled them to care for the people they loved (Pahud, 2008). The capacities of having employment, earning income, contributing to society and being regarded as kiwis were what Pahud (2008) termed 'social positions' which

motivated the former refugees to develop their ways of coping to overcome the adversities of resettlement.

Pahud's research was one of the first to highlight coping strategies of former refugees resettled specifically in New Zealand. The findings provide a background and a comprehensive framework around what refugees find useful as they try to cope with resettlement. While these findings were useful to consider when analysing the data in my research it should be noted that Pahud's research was not targeting former refugee youths. All the participants were adults and had families of their own – which is in contrast to the sample in my research. Pahud's research was also carried out before the Bhutanese refugees arrived in Christchurch hence the sample did not have any Bhutanese representation. The Canterbury earthquakes had not occurred at the time of this research so coping with earthquakes was also not covered in this research. The findings nonetheless contribute to the understanding of how former refugees deal with their circumstances – particularly in New Zealand.

The literature pertaining to the coping of refugees all highlight the need for more supportive and culturally appropriate programmes for refugees so that they can be properly assisted in achieving successful resettlement (Barnes & Aguilar, 2007; Beiser, 2006). However, the current literature has limited focus on how refugee youth in particular cope with resettlement and pre-migration stressors. Another feature of the existing literature is that most are limited to coping strategies employed in the post-migration period (Schweitzer et al, 2007). Most of the current studies on refugees and coping also tend to utilize quantitative methodologies. While these methods are appropriate for generating statistical tendencies, they have the drawback of relying on priori assumptions which can be problematic in under-researched areas where little is known about the phenomenon being examined (Schweitzer et al, 2007).

I will be addressing some of this lacuna in the literature through my research. The goal of my research was to explore the resources used by Bhutanese youth prior to coming to New Zealand and also as they resettled in Christchurch and experienced the Canterbury earthquakes. Some studies have explored refugee coping in the context of the trauma of war (eg Halcon et al, 2004) but there have been few studies on resettled refugee coping strategies post a natural disaster and there is also no identifiable evidence specifically on how refugee youth cope with a natural disaster.

Mindfulness as a way of coping

Considering that the counselling services offered to the participants as part of this research were mindfulness-infused and that mindfulness is emerging in the literature as a noteworthy method of coping with life circumstances, in the following section I will present some of the literature that has demonstrated the coping benefits of mindfulness. The literature presented in this section helped in the interpretation of research participants' responses to questions about the mindfulness-infused counselling sessions – which will be presented in a subsequent chapter.

According to Gross and Thompson (2007) mindfulness is able to boost coping methods because it involves the meta-cognitive ability to reappraise a situation and makes the individual more receptive to accept and process internal and external stimuli as they occur. Thus, mindfulness has the potential to encourage an individual to view their situation in more benign or neutral terms thereby prompting a shift in cognitions by 'turning down' the negative appraisal of an event. This reappraisal then reduces the tendency of mindful individuals to over-react to a situation and thus leads them to cope with it better (Baer, 2003; Brown et al, 2007; Creswell et al, 2007; Weinstein et al, 2008).

Other researchers like Bergin and Pakenham (2016) have proposed that mindfulness is an important potential coping resource that buffers a person against the negative effects of stress. In their research they have demonstrated that a non-judgemental attitude towards inner experiences was related to reduced levels of anxiety. However, mindfulness does not automatically boost psychological well-being during episodes of stress. For this to happen the individual must access positive coping resources along with being mindful. The researchers also concluded that mindfulness leads to individuals being better able to describe their experiences. This is of prime importance during highly stressful episodes because when a person describes a situation he is able to label his feelings better which in turn is necessary for communication and self-control. Being able to communicate effectively when under stress has been found to facilitate the receipt of social support and professional help and even to enhance

problem solving, thereby reducing vulnerability to depression and anxiety (Bergin and Pakenham (2016).

Detecting the situations which lead to stress are also a necessary prerequisite to implementing positive coping responses because without this capacity the effects of stress tend to accumulate gradually, and very often remain undetected until a serious problem arises (Salmon et al, 2004). The attention aspect that results from mindfulness can aid in the reduction of stress symptoms by contributing to a greater awareness of them. If a person's level of mindfulness is high then he/she would be aware of stress symptoms even when they are at low levels, which in turn is likely to enhance coping resources and counter the negative effects of stress (Branstrom et al, 2011). According to many researchers, mindful individuals have a greater capacity to manage stressors owing to their acceptance of the symptoms and hence also end up with better psychological outcomes (Ciesla et al, 2012).

The practice of mindfulness has also been found to foster a sense of detached coping among those struggling with a difficult life situation (Sugiura & Sugiura, 2015). Detached coping involves distancing oneself from external circumstances and problems. Detached coping in turn drastically reduces catastrophic thinking, owing to developing the skill of suspending one's negative thoughts. And a reduction in catastrophic thinking has been found to reduce psychological symptoms also, like obsessive behaviour (Wells & Morrison, 1994).

In addition to boosting an individual's coping methods, some evidence has indicated that the practice of mindfulness also impacts on an individual's belief in their ability to successfully manage their emotional reactions and stressful situations. This ability is termed 'coping self-efficacy' (Chesney et al, 2006; Luberto et al, 2014). The philosophy of mindfulness states that mindful individuals are able to cultivate an insight into the transitory nature of their emotions which in turn leads the individual to develop a sense of freedom and power in their ability to influence their life events (Nydahl, 2008). It is this insight that is purported to boost the individual's self-efficacy in the face of challenging situations (Britton et al, 2010; Cusens et al, 2010; Luberto et al, 2014). Available literature on coping self-efficacy suggests that if a person has the belief in his or her ability to perform specific coping behaviours then they will be able to influence the outcomes of their circumstances (Chesney et al, 2006). Along with

increasing an individual's belief in their ability to influence an event, research has found that practicing mindfulness was able to mediate the difficulties experienced in the regulation of emotions (Luberto et al, 2014).

The literature in this section indicates that mindfulness has been found useful as a way of coping particularly because it encourages the person to reappraise the situation they are in and see the transitory nature of their emotions. Based on these findings I would argue that it is worthwhile conducting mindfulness-infused sessions with the clients in my study, and then exploring whether or not their responses are the same as previous clients (as indicated in the literature) or not. This would aid in understanding the applicability of mindfulness-infused counselling with clients who have refugee backgrounds.

Coping and Social Support

Given the demonstrated influence of social support both in resilience and coping theories and the findings of Pahud's (2008) research on the effects of family support on well-being and Gurung's (2001) theories on the ways that people from collectivistic cultures deal with their problems, it might be beneficial to explore some literature on the mediating or non-mediating effects of social relationships on a person's ways of coping. The literature in this section is intended to facilitate an understanding of the narratives of the former Bhutanese refugee youth who participated in this study.

Social support involves the provision of psychological and material resources which act as buffers against stress by reducing the negative appraisal of a stressful situation and facilitating healthy behavioural responses (Cohen & Wills, 1985). There is a growing body of literature that has demonstrated the effects of social support in coping with stressful life events and this research has demonstrated the positive and negative effects of social support (Lehman et al, 1986; Hobfoll, 1990; Duck & Silver, 1990; Winstead et al 1992). The positive effects of social support include a decrease in depressive symptoms and a boost in levels of confidence (Winstead et al, 1992). Findings on social support from friends suggest that friendships buffer a person against loneliness and provide the emotional support that is required during a crisis (Winstead et al, 1992). These effects are seen particularly when time is spent among female friends

(Wheeler et al, 1983). It has been postulated that friends have the potential towards being skilful in giving information to or supporting the confidence levels among each other thus making them a stronger source of support (Winstead et al, 1992). It has also been found that children have the tendency to experience less stress and perform better when they are in the presence of a friend rather than an unfamiliar person (Torrance, 1969; Schwarz, 1972)

Other researchers like Lehman et al (1986) have found that friends and family might actually interfere with successful coping. This is more likely because in the majority of cases relatives and friends have gone through the same circumstances (eg – earthquakes, bereavement) and thus may be under stress themselves and in turn may have the tendency to make inappropriate attempts at social support. Similar findings were reported by Anna Bokszczanin (2008) who studied the role of family conflict and support in the aftermath of a flooding disaster in Poland. According to Bokszczanin, family-related resources are undoubtedly the most valuable resource for children and adolescents during a crisis, but merely being around family members is not sufficient as a source of support as the atmosphere prevailing in the family is also an important factor (Bokszczanin, 2008). It was found that when the family atmosphere is emotionally strained and laden with conflicts then this contributes to psychological difficulties rather than support (Silverman & Raj, 2003; Bokszczanin, 2008). Additionally, the daily stressors faced by parents like providing for the family may generate negative emotions and behaviours thus making it difficult to provide their children with the help and attention they need (Vernberg, 1999; Henry et al, 2004; Bokszczanin, 2008). These findings are important to consider within my thesis, because it should not be taken for granted that the participants feel adequately supported just because they are young and live with their families.

However, apart from immediate family, friendships have been found to be an important source of social support and coping with stress, and the literature has demonstrated that people often draw upon their friendships for support during unpleasant events that occur in their lives (Litwak & Szelenyi, 1969; Iwasaki & Mannel, 2000; Taylor et al, 2002; Glover & Parry, 2008). The social capital that develops between friends has been found to be important to an individual's well-being because it facilitates expressive and instrumental actions which have personal advantages (Lin, 2002). With youth, it has been observed that friendships play an important role in

emotional adjustment because friends are more likely to be immediately available and more likely to have relevant information (Rodriguez et al, 2003; Crockett et al, 2007). Furthermore, Schneider & Ward (2003) found that emotional support from peers was associated with better social adjustment and predicted lower psychological distress. But as in the case of family, even maintaining friendships does not always lead to high levels of support, in fact sometimes friendships have been found to be a source of anxiety for some people (Glover & Parry, 2008). The effect of support from friends depends on who they are and the quality of support they provide (Schneider & Ward, 2003; Glover & Parry, 2008).

Most of the current research on the effects of coping focuses on the amount of received support. However, there is also an emerging body of evidence that perceived support (the belief that help is available if needed) facilitates adaptive coping and reduces maladaptive coping when the individual is under stress (Sarason & Pierce, 1990; Cutrona et al, 1994; Fleishman et al, 2000). Perceived support has been found to decrease strategies of not coping such as avoidance, withdrawal and denial and increase beneficial engagement with stressful circumstances through strategies like positive thinking, cognitive restructuring and encouraging people to believe they have resources to call on (Dunkley et al. 2000; Tao et al, 2000; Calvete & Connor-Smith, 2006). This positive engagement with stressful situations has been demonstrated to have an impact on psychological adjustment (Compas et al, 2001; Brissette et al, 2002). Calvete & Connor- Smith (2006) have demonstrated through quantitative research with college students that those students who feel that there are people supporting them are more likely to attempt to solve their problems, actively express and regulate emotions and become less likely to avoid or deny their feelings and problems and engage in wishful thinking.

Research on received and perceived social support among youth has developed consistent findings, even with youth from diverse backgrounds (Tate et al, 2006; Budge et al, 2013; Zinn, 2016). Received social support was directly related to distress levels of genderqueer youth (Budge et al, 2013). Genderqueer youth who received more social support reported using more facilitative ways of coping, less avoidance, and having less experienced anxiety (Budge et al, 2013, 2014). Tate et al (2006) who examined the relationship between social support and coping among male youth who identified as either gay or bi-sexual and had been diagnosed with HIV proposed similar findings.

Tate et al (2006) observed that higher levels of social support reported by these men was linked with seeking additional support and positive coping while low levels of reported social support was linked with self-destructive coping. The researchers proposed that HIV infected youth who had either low or no access to social support were less able to take advantage of the resources they had and thus became overwhelmed and found the need to retreat, use denial or engage in self-destructive activities (Tate et al, 2006).

Available literature on refugees has indicated encouraging results on their access of social support to cope with their difficult life circumstances (Schweitzer et al, 2006; Kok et al, 2016; Rouhani et al, 2016). Schweitzer et al (2006) found social support resources important among resettled Sudanese refugees in Australia. They found that particularly the presence of family and the support of others within the Sudanese community were significant forms of emotional and instrumental support, and these determined the level of their mental health functioning. Rouhani et al (2016) investigated the role of social support among refugees in Uganda who had tested positive for HIV. It was found that social support resources were instrumental in the refugees accessing care and being tested. Continued levels of support helped them adhere to their HIV treatments. Research among resettled refugees in Ottawa, Canada found that former refugees were inclined to spend time among other former refugees because they felt that their similar life experiences helped them understand each other. These former refugees also reported that being with groups of other refugees helped them get support when they had problems and helped reduce their sense of isolation (Behnia, 2003).

The literature in this section highlights that social support is an important source of support during adversities and that the higher the level of actual or even perceived social support available, the higher the potential for adaptive coping. This finding was also observed within the literature on resilience which identifies supportive relationships outside the family serving as a protective factor leading to an improvement in coping or a decrease in the negative influence of being at risk (VanBreda, 2001; Zimmerman, 2013). Thus the question raised during my analysis of data was whether to interpret the participants' responses of persevering despite their hardships as resilience or coping. In an effort to understand the two concepts better I will present some literature on the concept of resilience in the next section.

Resilience

Resilience has been receiving increased attention within the discipline of developmental psychology as a result of many observations of people overcoming adversity in their daily lives (E.g. Lindstrom, 2001). Several longitudinal studies have been conducted to investigate why and how some disadvantaged adolescents manage to cope successfully with life events despite being exposed to chronic or severe stress through such experiences as domestic violence, poverty and discrimination (Moskovitz, 1983; Gakuba, 2015; Harrop et al, 2006). Some researchers concluded that many adolescents developed attributes of competence and successfully adapted over time primarily because of their belief in their personal capacities and the external support they received – which suggested that the concept of resilience was a 'real phenomenon' (Harrop et al, 2006; Pahud, 2008).

Resilience however is a complex concept for which there is no universally accepted definition (Zimmerman & Arunkumar, 1994). According to Fonagy (1994) – 'Resilience is normal development under difficult circumstances'. Later, however, Pahud (2008) defined resilience as 'the ability to bounce back or adapt successfully after negative life experiences, lifespan transitions or difficult circumstances (pg. 51). While these definitions help conceptualize the process of resilience, Zimmerman & Arunkumar (1994) highlight that it should not be seen as a fixed attribute of a person because the circumstances in which it may occur are dynamic. Thus, a person is not born with resilience nor do they develop it as a stable personal characteristic but rather they might become more or less resilient at different stages in their lives subject to a range of factors.

Present research on resilience has indicated that in order for a 'resilient factor' to be inferred, risk and protective factors need to be present. Coping on the other hand only looks at how the person is dealing with the situation he/she is facing and does not consider these factors. When considering resilience, risk factors refer to major or chronic traumatic events like the death of a relative or psychological abuse, drastic life changes like moving countries, cumulative stress and social disadvantages such as unemployment, poverty and discrimination (Werner, 2000; Murray, 2003; Martinez-Torteya et al, 2009). Protective factors on the other hand provide the resources for a person to deal effectively with stress induced by the risk factors by altering or reversing

their negative outcomes (Rutter, 1985; Murray, 2003; Martinez-Torteya, 2009). Protective factors usually refer to personal, temperamental and environmental support factors. They are fundamental elements in conceptualising resilience because they are believed to help increase the likelihood of a person overcoming difficulties by moderating the negative effect of risk exposure on their behaviour (Murray, 2003; Pahud, 2008). Researchers in the last two decades have demonstrated a shift in focus from risk factors to resilient factors with the aim of emphasizing positive instead of maladaptive attributes (e.g. Mohaupt, 2009; Rutter, 2012).

Existing research within developmental psychology (Fraser, 1997; Gilligan, 2000; Saleebey, 2012) has tried to investigate why some children actually thrive despite having difficult circumstances. Gilligan (2000) through his review of contemporary literature on the protective value of positive experiences on young people's resilience highlighted that even though understanding a child's qualities is an important part of understanding their resilient factor, it is also important to consider the experiences they have had and how they processed them. Other researchers like Clausen (1995) have proposed that even a relatively small event – like a favourable experience or a positive relationship, can make a big difference in a child's development of resilience. One factor that has been found to be of prime importance in the development of resilience among children is having what Bowlby (1988) referred to as 'secure base'. A young person's sense of a secure base is cultivated through a sense of belonging within social networks, relationships with reliable and responsive people and by routines and structures in their lives (Gilligan, 2000). A longitudinal study conducted by Werner and Smith (2001) in Hawaii supported these findings.

Werner and Smith (2001) closely examined the lives of an ethnically diverse group of men and women on the island of Kauai who were closely monitored from their perinatal period right through early adulthood by a host of public health professionals. From examining this sample they concluded that having a solid relationship with an interested adult (like a teacher) can go a long way towards young people doing well despite stressful circumstances in their lives. Gilligan (2000) proposed that young people can find their sense of a secure base even in everyday and ordinary activities like school, routines around mealtimes and time spent with the family. Byng-Hall (1995) highlighted that even though young people tend to spend less time around their secure bases, they often return to these relationships whenever they need to even until

mid-adulthood. Further literature on resilience has also postulated that social and family support are important protective factors in boosting a person's resilience (Werner & Smith, 2001; Halcon et al, 2004; Greeff & van der Merwe, 2004; Schweitzer et al, 2007; Pahud, 2008).

Specifically among the refugee population, the literature has identified exposure to violence as a major risk factor in the development of psychological disturbances (Geltman et al, 2005; Fazel et al, 2012). Particularly the violent events that occurred when the refugees left their homes were reported as most traumatic (Geltman et al, 2005; Montgomery, 2008). The degree of perceived personal threat during these traumatic episodes was another risk factor for the refugees (Angel et al, 2001). Pre-existing physical illnesses and/or psychological problems have also been identified in the literature as a risk factor in the wellbeing of refugees. This risk has been found to increase if the refugees sustained any personal injuries prior to their resettlement (Almqvist & Broberg, 1999). Within the refugee camps it has been observed that the amount of violence a family is exposed to is another risk factor, since it has been found to impact the children's psychological functioning (Almqvist et al, 1997; Montgomery et al, 2006). Montgomery et al (2006) observed that events like witnessing torture and detention of the parents and whether the child has been informed or not was a risk factor for stress disorders. Fazel et al (2012) conducted a systematic review of literature pertaining to the risk and protective factors among refugee children and they concluded that refugee children and adolescents who have resettled in high-income countries have often endured physical and mental challenges in the refugee camp they lived in, and continue to face hardships even after their arrival in their new host country. This has been attributed to the fact that most of these refugees have come from geographically distant, low income settings (UNHCR, 2009). Among the hardships these refugees must face after they arrive are the complex immigration process they have to negotiate to gain refugee status and the huge social, cultural and linguistic differences between their new host country and their place of origin (Ryan et al, 2008; Fazel et al, 2012).

On the other hand, among the protective factors that foster resilience among resettled refugees, social support has consistently been ranked the highest (Werner & Smith, 2001; Halcon et al, 2004; Greeff & van der Merwe, 2004; Schweitzer et al, 2007; Pahud, 2008; Fazel et al, 2012). Even perceived support and strength of peer relationships has been associated with improved psychological functioning among

refugees (Berthold, 2000; Kovacev, 2004), and conversely a lack of connection with the community was associated with depression (Sujoldzic, 2006). The presence of a wide range of contacts and parents often receiving visitors at home has also been found to be a protective factor (Tousignant et al, 1999). Another protective factor that has been observed among resettled refugees is the adherence to traditional values pertaining to family hierarchy, age and sex (Fazel et al, 2012). A lack of discussion among the family about adverse events has also been found to be a protective factor with respect to the child's mental health (Angel et al, 2001).

Ecological influences on resilience

As noted above, literature postulates that resilience helps protect a person against acute and chronic stressors, however as Ungar (2013) noted in his review of factors associated with resilience, the mechanisms of a person's resilient factor are complex and are dependent on the culture and context. In this section I will present some of the ecological factors that influence a person's resilience as discussed in the wider literature. Emerging research on resilience has indicated that the effects of difficult life circumstances are more likely to be mitigated by environmental influences rather than individual influences (Landau et al, 2008; Obrist et al, 2010). This suggests that research on resilience should place greater emphasis on a person's social environment. According to Ungar (2013) when an environment is facilitative, it can foster changes in the developmental pathways of a young person irrespective of individual differences. Further, a benign or even optimal environment has been found to allow children to flourish despite their circumstances (Sroufe et al, 2005; Berry et al, 2006) thus suggesting that nurture trumps nature when it comes to predicting resilience.

Werner (1989) has demonstrated through his longitudinal work with children from impoverished backgrounds that these children survive traumatic events best when there are adults who provide them access to belief systems, when their experiences at home and school reinforce attributions of internality and when they have opportunities to demonstrate their talents. It is the 'active nurturance' by the environment that 'potentiates' recovery from psychological burden (Werner, 1989). Other protective factors that have been found to foster resilience among young people are supportive

relationships, experiences of social justice, access to material resources, family cohesion, and cultural adherence (Ungar et al, 2007; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011).

Another factor that has been found to influence a person's resilience is the 'differential impact' of the environment on the person (Flouri et al, 2010; Ungar 2013). The effects of differential impact helps explain how adaptive responses are only evident when the person is under stress and are invisible when no stress is present. It has been observed that children who live in environments where there is a significant risk to their psychosocial development display significantly better abilities to cope with adversities (Ungar, 2013) which supports Flouri et al's (2010) postulation that some factors influence resilience more than others. Considering the differential impact of various stressors encourages viewing resilience as an evolving rather than a static concept. According to Wyman (2003) the adaptive fit between children's personality and their environments would be narrower in more adverse settings. Therefore, in highly adverse or stressful settings different definitions of children's competence may be required.

As a result of research on risk factors and protective factors, attempts have been made to develop a theory of resilience. Smith (1999), however, cautions against using a theory of resilience in research before determining whether the population being studied has in fact experienced the same level of adversity as those upon whom the theory is based. And Ungar, (2013) suggests that most resilience theory has been developed from samples that are lacking in diversity. Furthermore, others (Windle et al, 2011; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011) note there is a paucity of resilience-level instruments that have been developed incorporating indigenous markers of positive coping. This omission may be particularly important when researchers such as Ungar (2013) highlight that a person's resilience has also been found to vary according to the culture to which he belongs, because embedded in each culture are expectations regarding appropriate ways to cope with adversity (Ungar, 2013). There is currently a small but growing body of evidence that identifies the different coping factors across cultures (Marsella, 2010). Harms et al (2009) for example, found that among orphaned Ugandan youth healthy coping meant both being able to physically look after one's self and the demonstration of morality which contrasted with what was considered as healthy coping among western youth. These findings are an example of how the theories of coping and resilience have a significant overlap, which will be elaborated in the subsequent section.

Another aspect of how cultural factors influence processes related to resilience has been demonstrated by Golden and Mayseless (2008) who found that culture influences how adults prepare young people to cope with stressors in their environment. They observed teachers and their kindergarten students in Israel – where there is the constant threat of war and the related violence. It was observed that the teachers told the children that they were to look after themselves and not get hurt but were never given any instructions on how to avoid danger. The teachers also emphasized worse case scenarios by talking about fire and death and in general made the world seem like a dangerous and chaotic place. According to the teachers, creating an unpredictable environment for the children encouraged them to find their personal resources so that they could take adequate care of themselves. It was found that the children learned not only to nurture their personal resources and avoid hazards but were also able to use their environment to their advantage (Golden & Mayseless, 2008).

Hestyanti (2006) interviewed children who survived the 2004 Tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia and observed that the children explained their successful adaptation as the result of an internal motivation to recover, having a good heart, openness to listening to other people, religious bonds, self-responsibility, a sense of humour and an easy-going personality. Other research has indicated that certain sub-groups of population possess certain unnamed adaptive processes that challenge the classification as maladaptive for some coping strategies (Ungar, 2004). For example, Solis (2003) found that cultural minority youth in America tend to associate with cultural gangs as a strategy to avoid being attacked by the cultural majority gangs. While this strategy might be regarded as controversial it was considered adaptive by this group of youth. This is an important indication for researchers because it demonstrates that only after engaging with the youth and their narratives can the adaptive quality of their behaviour become intelligible (Ng-Mak et al, 2004). Without this engagement, what the youth described as being resilient may in fact appear to be pathological. According to Ungar (2013) when the element of cultural variability is introduced into the interpretation of resilience, the assumption of what is considered functionally adaptive behaviour is challenged. This finding is important to consider within my research. The engagement I had with the narratives of the Bhutanese former refugee participants helped me interpret both their coping strategies and processes of resilience.

The research presented in this section demonstrates the complex interactions that are associated with the term resilience. I have found it helpful to consider the idea that the important foci surrounding resilience as a concept are the risk and protective factors, the ecological influences, and the way adversities vary within situations and thus may require a different conceptualization of resilience for every situation. Two definitions of resilience that seemed to fit with the context of my thesis were the ones provided by Fonagy (1994) and Pahud (2008). According to Fonagy, adversities do not necessarily lead to pathology, while Pahud presented resilience as a person's ability to bounce back after adversities. These helped in the interpretation of my participants' narratives where it was witnessed that all of them thrived despite their hard lives in the refugee camp and their difficulties post resettlement. Furthermore, the notion that protective factors such as supportive relationships, family cohesion and cultural adherence have been useful for me to consider while interpreting the narratives.

Resilience and Coping compared

As set out earlier in this chapter on the literature, I presented literature on resilience and coping because I found that these two concepts helped give meaning to the narratives of my participants. But as I read literature on these two concepts I observed that there seemed to be a significant overlap of the two with the concept of coping appearing multiple times within the literature on resilience. I struggled to make sense of the two concepts and make a choice as to which one would best inform the data of my research. I also observed that this overlap of resilience and coping were highlighted by researchers like Boerner & Jopp (2007) and Riediger & Ebner (2007). In this section then I seek to present the relationship between resilience and coping which I have obtained from the literature so as to clarify my understanding of these concepts and how they would apply to my findings.

According to Folkman and Moskowitz (2004) resilience and coping are related constructs even though coping refers to cognitive and behavioural strategies used by an individual to manage the demands of stressful situations, while resilience refers to adaptive outcomes in the face of adversity. Sills et al (2006) postulated that coping styles (particularly of the problem-focused type) contribute to a person's resilience.

Leipold and Greve (2009) proposed that resilience is neither a trait nor a process but rather is a phenomenon that needs to be explained by referring to a person's ways of coping. Greve and Staudinger (2006) conceptualized resilience as a constellation between individual resources (including ways of coping), social conditions and the immediate challenge or obstacle. According to this conceptualization, resilience is a result of the dynamic interaction between these three processes.

According to Leipold and Greve (2009), people generally react to acute problems or life crises either by actively trying to solve them or by attempting to reduce the stress caused by these problems. An increasing number of researchers have postulated that most theories of coping can be integrated into this conceptualization of dealing with crises (Baltes & Baltes, 1990; Greve, 1997; Heckhausen & Schulz, 1999; Brandtstadter, 2007). It is this highly dynamic, complex interactive and constantly evolving coping process that results in resilience (Leipold & Greve, 2009). Therefore, Leipold and Greve recommend that an integrative framework facilitates a better understanding of the processes and relationship between coping and resilience.

Based on the above literature, my understanding is that a person's coping processes contribute to his or her resilient factor. Thus, a person who is considered to be resilient can also be said to possess healthy and successful ways of coping. However, a person who demonstrates successful coping strategies cannot be said to be resilient without considering the 'ecological context' of his or her coping. This implies that coping and resilience can exist simultaneously within a personality but they should be inferred separately rather than taken for granted. Within my research I can positively conclude that the participants have reported coping with their hardships in adaptive ways. However, I will need to consider carefully the ecological contexts within each participant's narrative before determining whether they are also displaying resilience. This will be discussed further in the findings and discussion chapters.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented and commented on some of the literature pertinent to my thesis, *Vis* adolescent development, refugees, counselling, mindfulness, coping and resilience. Counselling and Mindfulness were the two services that were offered to the participants in this study. The theoretical background and shortcomings of person-centred counselling, as well as my rationale for selecting it, has been presented in this chapter. This is followed by a discussion on the history of mindfulness and the use of mindfulness in psychotherapy. The outcome of the discussion on psychotherapy with refugees highlights the need for more supportive programs for refugees both prior to and after they have been resettled. The literature on mindfulness has indicated that it has the potential to help people cope with difficult situations, which supports the argument for the benefits of investigating mindfulness further. Given the focus of this thesis on the coping and adaptive strategies of former refugees, the chapter concludes with a discussion on the literature on coping and resilience, and how a person's ecological context influences the way he/she appraises and copes with life situations. Some of the literature pertaining specifically to the coping styles adopted by refugees has also been presented. This section concludes with a brief discussion on the overlap of coping and resilience and how these may be used to interpret my data.

Chapter Four

Under the Methodological Sky

This chapter begins with a brief description of qualitative research and the various types of qualitative methodologies. It also reflects my understanding of the various methods and why I ended up choosing phenomenology over the others. The commonly used qualitative methods described in the literature are phenomenology, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, case studies and ethnography. I begin by briefly describing these in order to outline my reasons for rejecting some and selecting phenomenology.

Following the theoretical discussion of the methodology is a description of the procedures that were followed in the data collection and analysis of this research. The process of working towards ethical approval for the data collection of this research has been described in detail. I also describe the rationale behind the choice of the selected target group, and the process by which they were identified and invited to participate in this research. The actual method employed while gathering and analysing the data, using a phenomenological approach, has been described later in the section.

Introduction

After deciding on my research topic and reviewing literature on refugee resettlement, youth studies, and studies with therapeutic interventions, I realised that qualitative methods were the most appropriate for this study. According to authors Starks and Trinidad (2007), qualitative research enables us to delve into questions of meaning, examine institutional and social practices and processes, identify barriers and facilitators to change, and discover the reasons for the success or failure of interventions (Starks and Trinidad, 2007).

Qualitative methods generally facilitate the understanding of experiences, attitudes and how a community or individuals within a community perceive a particular

issue. The methods aim to answer questions about the 'what', 'how' or 'why' of a phenomenon. In contrast if a researcher wants to understand the 'how many' or 'how much' of a phenomenon then a quantitative method needs to be employed (Rotchford et al, 2002).

My research goal was to understand how the Bhutanese youths who have been resettled in Christchurch have coped with resettlement and subsequently experienced the Canterbury earthquakes. I was also seeking to explore any impact mindfulness in counselling might have on the coping mechanisms of these youths. Considering that my research aim was to explore the why and how of the Bhutanese youths' coping, my choice of employing qualitative rather than quantitative research methods seemed justified. In addition, given that my training is in counselling, my skills in interviewing would align with qualitative techniques that involve interviewing participants.

I then needed to decide which qualitative research method would be most appropriate. I therefore explored possible options of Grounded Theory, Narrative Inquiry, Case Studies and Ethnography before deciding that phenomenology would be the most appropriate.

Grounded theory

Grounded theory originated with the work of Glaser and Strauss in the year 1967. Their writings at the time were directed towards improving social scientists' capacities for generating theory that will be relevant to their research. The process of discovery for Glaser and Strauss's grounded theory was anchored firmly in the roots of positivism and post positivism (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Taylor 2013). The goal of Glaser and Strauss' version of grounded theory was to discover theory which emerged from data through meticulous and systematic observations, comparisons, and analyses of like groups and data sources (Taylor, 2013).

One of the definitions of grounded theory was provided by Strauss and Corbin (1998). They described grounded theory as a process where data are systematically gathered and analysed and then used to derive a theory. It is a process where the data collection, analysis and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another. A

researcher who is adopting grounded theory does not begin with a preconceived theory in mind; rather he begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data. The theory that is derived from the data is more likely to resemble the 'reality' since it is derived by putting together a series of concepts that are based on experience or through speculation. Grounded theories are more likely to offer insight, enhance understanding and provide a meaningful guide to action because they are drawn from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998)

Another version of grounded theory has been presented by Charmaz (2014). She asserts that the potential of grounded theory is its primarily inductive analytic processes that lead to theorising how meanings, actions and social structures are constructed. Charmaz also highlights that while employing grounded theory for research, preconceived ideas cannot be forced upon the data, in fact, extant theory can only 'earn' its way into the analysis after much of the inductive analytical work is done (Charmaz, 2014).

The ultimate goal in research using the method of grounded theory is developing a theory that is grounded in the data. This process is performed by the constant comparing and moving back and forth through progressively focused data and subsequently increasing the abstract categorisations of the data to elevate the level of descriptions, and work towards generating a formalised theory. During the analysis of data in the grounded theory method the analysis becomes increasingly abstracted and develops from raw data into codes. These codes are then converted into categories which are finally processed into theoretical concepts. These codes, categories and concepts, when placed together, are the building blocks that generate a theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1992; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Marlowe, 2010)

According to Dennis Howitt (2010) the process of grounded theory essentially involves the following conditions –

- To bring the researcher into close familiarity with their data
- To encourage the researcher to code small elements of the data
- To encourage the researcher to synthesize the various elements into categories

- Continually require the researcher to compare the data with the developing theory in the analysis

While I did make every effort to get into close familiarity with my data during analysis, codes were not a part of the process as my goal was not to break down and group my data. The end result was to capture the resettlement and earthquake stories of the former Bhutanese refugee youths and to highlight the ways in which they have coped. Mindfulness infused counselling was offered to these youths but it was offered as a means of 'giving back' to the participants and not merely as an intervention. Furthermore, the counselling process was not being evaluated in my research, it was offered to the Bhutanese youth as a service and the point of interest was to see if it had any influence on their coping mechanisms. Themes were generated in the analytical process but not for the purpose of theory generation. The themes were used to facilitate the understanding of the essence of the lived experiences of the former Bhutanese refugee youths.

Constructing a theoretical framework for the use of mindfulness in counselling was not the goal of the current thesis with youth of a refugee background, hence grounded theory was not regarded as an appropriate methodology to answer my research questions.

Ethnography

With grounded theory the researcher develops a theory by examining the research participants who share in a particular process action or interaction. However, the participants are not likely to be located in the same place or interacting with each other on such a basis that they would develop shared patterns of behaviour, beliefs and language. Ethnography, on the other hand, is concerned with examining these shared patterns as it focuses on an entire culture-sharing group, who have been intact and interacting for long enough to develop discernible working patterns (Creswell, 2013).

Ethnography can be defined as a qualitative design in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviours, beliefs

and language of a culture-sharing group (Harris, 2001). Another definition states ethnography to be the study of culture (Taylor & Francis, 2013).This methodology is considered to be the oldest in the qualitative realm (Strauss et al, 1984; Hoare, 2012) and has developed from the traditions of anthropology and sociology (Polit and Beck, 2013; Genzuk, 2003; Gobo, 2008).

Research employing ethnography evolved from answering questions about people – their ways of living, what they believe and how they adapt to change (Burns and Grove, 2005). Ethnographic studies of all types aim to interpret a culture by drawing on the nuances of what makes that culture distinct. Discerning how cultures see themselves and view the world is an intrinsic aspect of ethnographic research and this goal is achieved through cultural immersion (Allen et al, 2008). Cultural immersion is a central point of difference between ethnography and other qualitative research methodologies (Baumbusch, 2011).

Ethnographic researchers spend a great deal of time in the cultural setting they are studying, they listen, observe and ask questions to gain insight into the cultural milieu and the day-to-day relationships that influence how individuals behave, why and under what circumstances (Taylor & Francis, 2013). By being immersed in a culture the researcher's awareness is amplified and he can better appreciate what is happening, which in turn facilitates the data analysis (Allen et al, 2008). Ethnography as a research method may also be employed when broad observations are required rather than narrowly focused ones (Howitt, 2010). Ethnography is quite different from other fine-tuned qualitative approaches in that it focuses on studying social interaction and cultures in as full and natural a way as possible (Howitt, 2010).

Some of the defining characteristics of ethnographic researches which have been obtained from a review of published ethnographies are as follows –

- The finished product in an ethnographic research is always a complete description of the culture of a group. The ethnography may be of the entire group or a subset of a group. Wolcott (2008) went a step further and stated that rather than being seen as the study of culture, ethnography can be considered a study of the social behaviours of an identifiable group of people.

- In an ethnographic study the researcher looks for patterns (including rituals and cultural regularities) of a group's mental activities such as their ideas and beliefs which can be expressed through language, or the group's material activities like how they behave with each other and other similar nuances, which can be expressed through their actions and can be observed by the researcher (Fetterman, 2010)

- Another defining feature in ethnography is the role of theory. Theory plays an important role in that it focusses the researcher's attention towards the goal. Ethnographic researchers always start out with a theory (a broad explanation as to what they hope to find) drawn from cognitive science, to understand ideas and beliefs and to observe how individuals in the group behave and talk. The researcher's first step is to use a theory to try and give meaning to the patterns of behaviour in a culture (Fetterman, 2010).

- The next characteristic of ethnography is the extensive fieldwork that takes place. The researcher relies on many diverse methods like interviews, observations, symbols, artefacts, focus groups, review of documentary evidence and field notes, to identify the patterns of the group being researched. An ethnographic researcher also gives pride of place to the views of participants that have been gathered in the fieldwork. The participants' or insiders' views are later synthesized with the researcher's scientific perspective to develop an overall cultural interpretation. Prior to the research being conducted, not much is known about how the group functions but by reading the interpretations of the ethnographer, people are able to develop a novel understanding of the group (Creswell, 2013)

The end result of an ethnographic research should always be an understanding of how the culture-sharing group works, the essence of how it functions and the group's way of life (Creswell, 2013). Wolcott (2010) provides two essential questions that a good ethnographic research should typically answer -

1 – "What do people in this setting have to know and do to make this system work?"

2 – "If culture, sometimes defined simply as shared knowledge, is mostly caught rather than taught, how do those being inducted into the group find their 'way in' so that an adequate level of sharing is achieved?" (Wolcott, 2010)

Even though ethnography is regarded by researchers as a method in its own right and capable of generating a rich variety of data which is unobtainable in any other way it does come with challenges. The chief drawback of using ethnography is that it is a resource-hungry approach (Howitt, 2010). The time to collect data is extensive and involves prolonged time in the field which consequently requires financial support. Sensitivity to the needs of the research participants and the environment where the research is being conducted is paramount in ethnography. The researcher always needs to bear in mind and report on the impact he or she has on the people being researched and the places being explored. Occasionally there is also the possibility that a researcher may "go native" and be compromised and therefore unable to complete the study (Creswell, 2013; Howitt, 2010).

In the current study ethnography was decided against as a methodology primarily because it would not serve to answer the research questions that had been constructed. The aim in this study was to capture how Bhutanese youths of refugee background have experienced resettlement and the Canterbury earthquakes, rather than to gain an understanding of the lives of the resettled Bhutanese community. The question was very specific and hence required a different methodology.

Apart from this, even though I have some knowledge about the lifestyles, customs and traditions of the Bhutanese people and even speak a common language with them, it is beyond the scope of this study for me to engage with the community on a daily basis and for a long period of time. The requirements regarding participants in ethnographic research is also very specific. In order to generate a successful ethnographic research, participants from a wide range of ages within the community need to be invited to the research and not just a single group like is being done in this study. For all these reasons then, ethnography was deemed to not be the appropriate methodology for this study.

Case Studies

Although while doing ethnography the researcher might consider the entire cultural group that he/she is studying as a unitary case, nevertheless in doing so the intent of ethnographic research is still to develop an understanding of how that particular culture works rather than to develop an in-depth understanding of a single case. When a researcher is setting out to gain a richer understanding of just one case, or a few, it requires a different methodology, such as the case study approach.

Yin (2009) defines the case study approach as "a research involving the study of a case within a real-life, contemporary context or setting". Another definition of the method was proposed by Abercrombie et al (1984) in the dictionary of sociology and they proposed that a case study is "a detailed examination of a single example of a class of phenomena" (Abercrombie et al, 1984, p. 34). Other authors have presented the case study as a strategy of inquiry, a methodology, or a comprehensive research strategy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1998). Case study research is a qualitative approach in which a researcher explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth collection of data involving multiple sources. The researcher then reports his findings in a description of the case (Creswell, 2013).

A researcher who chooses the case study approach first has to determine if it is the right approach to answer the research questions. It is a good approach to employ if the researcher has clearly identifiable cases with boundaries. The key at this stage is to define a case that can be bound by certain parameters like a specific time and place. Typically, the researcher should aim to select current, real-life cases that are in progress so that they can gather accurate information that is not lost with time. A single case can sometimes suffice but sometimes researchers select multiple cases so that they can be compared. Multiple cases are also preferred as the hallmark of a good case study is an in-depth understanding of the case and a single case may not be able to yield this understanding (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2013).

In identifying their cases the researchers most often resort to purposive sampling targeting primarily the cases that are accessible, and at the same time diverse (Creswell, 2013). The data collection process is typically extensive and involves

multiple sources of information including, but not limited to, documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and examining physical and personal artefacts (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2013). When analysing the cases the researchers sometimes opt for a holistic analysis that scrutinizes the whole case, or an embedded analysis that only looks at specific aspects of the case (Yin, 2009). From the analysis emerges a detailed description of the case including the history, chronology and a day-by-day rendering of the activities of the case (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 1988). After this comes the final stage where the researcher reports on the meaning that has been derived from the case and also reports the lessons that have been learned along the way of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

As a methodology the case study approach is sometimes regarded as unreliable and inadequate. This stems mostly from the misunderstandings that researchers have regarding this approach. Bent Flyvbjerg has written widely about these misunderstandings and has with systematic research and intelligent argument refuted each of them (Flyvbjerg, 1998, 2001, 2015). There are five major misunderstandings about the case study approach. Each of them along with Flyvbjerg's rebuttal of them has been presented below.

The first misunderstanding that researchers have about case studies is that the concrete, practical knowledge that they provide is not as valuable as the general, theoretical knowledge that is generated by other methodologies. According to Flyvbjerg the closeness to real-life situations that is provided by the case study approach is important because human behaviour cannot be meaningfully understood theoretically. Also the proximity to the case plays an important role in sharpening the skills of the researcher. Keeping a distance from the case can lead to what Flyvbjerg calls a ritualistic blind alley and a stultified learning process. Therefore, the practical knowledge provided by case studies is more valuable because predictive theories and universals cannot be found while studying human affairs.

The second misunderstanding that researchers have with the case study approach is that it cannot be counted as a scientific method since it mostly involves just one case and hence the results obtained cannot be generalized to the wider population. According to Flyvbjerg formal generalization in scientific research is overvalued. Making generalizations from data is a worthy outcome of research but it is definitely

not the only way to work. Sometimes the results from a case study are central to a scientific generalization as a supplement or alternative to another method. The force of example that is provided by case studies is sometimes underestimated.

The third misunderstanding about case studies stems from the previous one that generalizations cannot be made on the basis of individual cases. The claim is that case studies are a useful method for generating hypotheses in the initial stages of a piece of research but the testing of the hypothesis and the building of the theory is best carried out by other methods. Eckstein (1975) asserted that case studies are valuable at all stages of the theory-building process but are most valuable where candidate theories are tested. He further stated that the testing of a hypothesis relates directly to the question of generalizability which in turn leads to the question of case selection (Eckstein, 1975). Strategic selection of cases has been found to increase the generalizability of a case study. Thus Flyvbjerg concluded that case studies are useful for generating and testing hypotheses but should not be limited to these research activities alone.

The fourth misunderstanding of case studies is that the method maintains a bias towards verification, that is, they ostensibly allow more room for the researcher's subjectivity and arbitrary judgment than other methods (Flyvbjerg, 2015). Diamond (1996) held the view that the case study method suffers from a crippling drawback because it does not possess any methods for curbing one's tendencies to stamp one's pre-existing interpretations on data as they accumulate.

Other researchers who have employed the in-depth case study method have reported that their preconceived views, assumptions and hypotheses were wrong and that their case material actually compelled them to revise their hypotheses on essential points (Campbell, 1975; Ragin, 1992; Geertz, 1995; Wieviorka, 1992; Flyvbjerg,1998, 2001). Another advantage of the case study method is that it can close-in on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to the phenomena as they actually unfold. The question of subjectivism and bias towards verification apply to all methods and not just to the case study. Flyvbjerg maintained that, regarding preconceived notions, case studies contain a greater bias towards falsification of preconceptions than toward verification of these.

The final misunderstanding about case studies is that it is often difficult to summarize and develop general propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies. A case study often contains a substantial element of a narrative and such narratives may be difficult to summarize into neat propositions and theories (Mitchell & Charmaz, 1996; Rouse, 1990; Roth, 1989; White, 1990). Peattie (2001) stated that the very value of the case study and the contextual and interpenetrating nature of forces of the case are lost when one tries to sum it up in large and mutually exclusive concepts. Flyvbjerg (2015) maintained that the case story itself is the result and the virtual reality of the research and hence should be read as narratives in their entirety and should neither be summarized nor shortened in any way.

This method of qualitative research is the only one of the other five described in this chapter that might have a fit with my research. Adopting a case study would have provided an in-depth insight into the coping mechanisms of former Bhutanese refugee youths. However, as set out earlier my research question is very specific as I am seeking to capture the lived experiences of these youths as they experienced resettlement, the Canterbury earthquake, and mindfulness in counselling.

A case study approach might have aided in providing an in-depth understanding of their coping mechanisms but their experiences of the earthquakes unfortunately are not bound by time, which is a requirement while selecting cases for a case study. The last major aftershock shook Christchurch in 2012; more than four years have passed since the event and I am therefore not studying a time-bound experience but instead am relying on my participants' ability to recall the events. These conditions created a more favourable setting for the use of phenomenology rather than a case study.

As with some of the other methods, case studies also require the gathering of information from multiple sources and this would have been an ethical challenge. The Bhutanese youths all have refugee backgrounds, and lived in refugee camps, and hence were not able to bring many of their belongings and artefacts with them to New Zealand. The few possessions they do have are very dear to them and they would not consent to submitting them for a research project (nor should such a request be made of a vulnerable group such as this). Another barrier to getting data from other sources would be encountered while trying to interview friends and family members. The Bhutanese community in Christchurch is very small and hence trying to interview one person about

another person would not be feasible especially where preserving confidentiality is concerned. Furthermore, many of the community members, particularly the parents and elders, do not speak English which would then require trained interpreters and pose further ethical challenges because even the trained interpreter would have to be someone from within the community who is able to communicate in English and Nepali – which is the language spoken by the Bhutanese people. For these reasons then, it was decided that phenomenology would be a better option as a methodology than the case studies method.

Narrative Inquiry

In the history of human social science research, there is little consensus on the actual starting point of narrative inquiry. One suggestion is that it began in the 1920s in social science research as a systematic means of analysing literature (Elliott, 2005).

A narrative can be understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event or an action or a series of events or actions which are chronologically connected (Czarniawska, 2004). It is a method whereby qualitative researchers use words and language as data from which to create meaning about human experiences. As a research methodology, narratives are as broad and wide as the human imagination and the ability to tell stories about lives (Taylor & Francis, 2013).

Definitions of narrative inquiry/analysis spin around the central, three pronged axis of the importance of the story, the storyteller and the listener (Taylor & Francis, 2013). Firstly, narratives are a series of stories depicting people's lived experiences (Bell, 2009; Riessmann, 2008). Secondly, researchers are interested in how storytellers narrate their experiences, thereby constructing meaning for themselves and their audiences (Chase, 2010; Hole, 2007). Thirdly, in a narrative the researchers become the listeners, focusing on the reflexive interplay between the narrations and the environments (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009). Sometimes the researchers are also faced with the task of finding a deeper meaning in the stories by experientially aligning themselves with the stories of their participants (Myerhoff, 1979; Behar, 2007).

Researchers who adopt a narrative approach collect stories from individuals about their lived and told experiences. These stories sometimes emerge from conversations with the researcher but it is also possible that a researcher and a participant can co-construct the story or that a story emerges from a performance that was intended to convey a message (Riessman, 2008). A narrative tells a story of individual experiences and may shed light on the identities of individuals and how they see themselves (Creswell, 2013).

A narrative research methodology is best for capturing detailed stories or life experiences of a single individual or a small number of individuals. Once the researcher has selected the appropriate persons to be the participants he/ she must spend considerable time with them gathering their stories through multiple sources. The participants may record their stories in a journal or the researcher might go out into their environments and observe them while recording field notes. Additionally researchers may collect letters sent by the participants, assemble stories about the participants from other family members, gather documents about the participants and go through their personal artefacts (Creswell, 2013).

This might seem like a simple and straightforward procedure but in reality the research participants can often become wary and uncommunicative, particularly at the outset. To overcome this, the researcher is often required to meet with the participants on a number of occasions to gain their confidence and to encourage them to reflect on their life experiences. Another challenge for the researcher is to minimise his/her influence on the participant's narratives. He/she must appear interested but at the same time present a neutral stance so as not to encourage a particular narrative (Smith, 2015).

Chase (2010) suggests four main approaches to narrative inquiry which are briefly outlined below –

- The story and the life – this approach focuses on the relationship between people's life stories and the quality of their life experiences, so the content of the stories are important to the researcher.

- Storytelling as lived approach – researchers who choose this approach are interested in how people narrate their experiences and use narration as a practice of constructing meaningful selves, identities and realities.

- Narrative practices and narrative environments – this method turns attention to how people's narrative practices are shaped by or shape their narrative environment. The focus is on the 'reflexive interplay' between narrator and environment.

- Researcher and the story – in this method the researcher becomes a part of the research by treating their stories about life experience (including the research itself) as a significant and necessary focus of narrative inquiry.

Analysing the stories is also a task that requires creativity. A key theme in the analysis of the narration is the relationship between the researcher and the researched in which both parties will learn and change in the encounter (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Both the researcher and the participants also negotiate the meaning of the stories (and the other sources of information) which in turn also adds a validity check to the analysis (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Another chief element involved in the analysis of a narrative is the shaping of the story into a chronology by the researcher (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The participants may talk about their past, present, or future and do not necessarily talk about them in a chronological sequence. It is the task of the researcher to provide a causal link among the ideas. Researchers who use a narrative approach also endeavour to actively involve their participants in the research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2013).

Similar to other methods, narrative inquiry comes with its own set of challenges and criticisms. One of the main challenges with a narrative inquiry is that the researcher is faced with the task of collecting extensive information about the participants and gaining a clear understanding of the context of the participant's life, which require the researcher to possess a 'keen eye' (Creswell, 2013). Edel (1984) stated that a narrative researcher should be able to uncover the "figure under the carpet" and should be able to grasp the multi-layered context of the participant's life.

A narrative inquiry involves a researcher gathering stories from participants and then weaving them together to form another story. Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) pointed

out that this process itself poses further challenges of deciding whose version of the story is 'true' and more convincing. And once the truer story has been identified it is another challenge to determine to whom it belongs – the researcher or the participant? (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Howitt (2010) has noted that narrative inquiry as a methodology is still finding its focus and while it has made some tangible achievements it still lacks a strong synthesis. Models of narrative inquiry are harder to come by and the theory is more difficult to clarify. (Howitt, 2010; Morgan, 2000).

Narrative inquiry was considered as a possible methodology in the initial stages of planning this study. The main concern for me was that using narrative inquiry would make it extremely complicated to draw the line between therapy and research specifically because counselling sessions were offered to the participants in my study, and some researchers have noted that many people find being interviewed to be therapeutic (Ortiz, 2001; Speedy, 2007; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Further to this, as with ethnography, it was not possible for me to spend a lot of time with my participants prior to gathering data owing to lack of time for both parties, as well as certain ethical reasons. Since I had arrived from overseas to carry out this study I did not have any previous connections with the resettled Bhutanese community, so spending the time attempting to uncover the 'figure under their carpets' would require much more than the stipulated time that was available for my research. Such being the case, it was decided to not use this methodology.

Phenomenology

As phenomenology is the chosen methodology of this research, it has been described in this section in. some detail. The rationale for its adoption has also been written about in the following section.

Background

One of the commonly used qualitative approaches is phenomenology which has its roots in early 20th century European philosophy. The word phenomenon comes from

the Greek word ‘phaenesthai’ which means to flare up, to show itself or to bring to light (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology was first used to describe a philosophical tradition in the work of the German philosophers Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger (Patton, 2002).

Phenomenology involves the use of thick description and close analysis of lived experience to understand how meaning is created through embodied perception (Sokolowski, 2000; Stewart & Mickunas, 1974). Phenomenology contributes to a deeper understanding of lived experiences by exposing taken-for-granted assumptions about these ways of knowing. Sokolowski (2000) conceptualised phenomenology as follows -

“Phenomenological statements, like philosophical statements, state the obvious and the necessary. They tell us what we already know. They are not new information, but even if not new, they can still be important and illuminating, because we often are very confused about just such trivialities and necessities” (p. 57).

Through the close examination of individual experiences, a phenomenological researcher seeks to capture the meaning and common features, or essences, of an event or experience. In phenomenological research the researcher engages with the analysis as a faithful witness to the accounts in the data (Tapper, 2014). Phenomenology also emphasizes human experience by paying attention to a person’s subjectivity and individual life situation (Archer, 2000; Giorgi, 2005; McCosker et al, 2004).

There are many branches and traditions of phenomenology that have been developed including ethical phenomenology (Levinas, 1978), oneiric-poetic phenomenology (Bachelard, 1964), hermeneutic phenomenology (van Manen, 1990), deconstruction phenomenology (Derrida, 1973) and literary phenomenology (Blanchot, 1981) to name a few.

Ethical phenomenology includes involuntary experiences of ethical responsibilities which according to its proponents are fundamental to the experience of human relationships and towards experiences with oneself (Levinas, 1978; van Manen, 2014). Oneiric-poetic phenomenology makes use of poetic imagery, language, and dream representations to understand a phenomenon. It is a linguistic branch of phenomenology and promotes the full pathic power of words and language. According

to its founder Gaston Bachelard, the oneiric-poetic branch must make phenomenologists of all its readers (Bachelard, 1964; van Manen, 2014). Deconstruction phenomenology aims at understanding experiences but relies on texts rather than on lived experiences. Phenomenologists who practice this method aim to demonstrate the essential variance underlying all meaningful distinctions between people and things (Derrida, 1973; van Manen, 2014). Literary phenomenology explores the meaning of inquiring into the essence of things using writing. Literary phenomenologists rely of writing and language to provide their readers with fundamental insights into the nature of the real life and the mystery of meaning (Blanchot, 1981; van Manen, 2014).

Most of the phenomenological methods described above are suited to literary projects rather than health sciences. Further, from reading the literature on the application of these methods it seems that they do not fit with the research goals of the current thesis.

For this reason I turned to the method of hermeneutic phenomenology, specifically the one proposed by Max van Manen. This method focuses on lived experiences and the meanings that people attach to these experiences. It incorporates both descriptive and interpretative (hermeneutic) elements and hence van Manen uses these words more or less interchangeably (van Manen, 1990). This method aligned with the goals of my research as I was interested in understanding the meanings that the Bhutanese former refugee youths assigned to resettlement, coping, and adverse life events, and how they described and interpreted these events. I also attempted to capture the lived experiences of these youths as they experienced all these phenomena.

Practicing phenomenology

When undertaking phenomenological research, the lived experience becomes the description of a phenomenon, thus the researcher takes on specific responsibilities in transforming the information. Reinharz (1983) used the word ‘transforming’ rather than writing. The first step in a phenomenological inquiry is transforming people’s experiences into language. During this step the researcher, through verbal interaction,

creates an opportunity for the lived experience to be shared (Reinharz, 1983). In my research this opportunity was created through inviting the Bhutanese youths to share their stories in unstructured interviews.

Streubert and Carpenter (2011) highlight that the researcher must possess certain qualities that will permit access to data that participants possess. The ability to communicate with clarity and ensure participants are comfortable expressing their experiences should be the hallmark qualities of a phenomenological researcher (Speziale et al, 2011). The researcher is the tool for data collection and he must function effectively to facilitate this process. The researcher must also recognize that personal characteristics such as gender and age may influence the interview. It is for this reason that researchers must determine in advance whether they are the appropriate people to access a given person's or group's experience (Reinharz, 1983; Streubert & Carpenter, 2011).

Data collection strategies for a phenomenological study usually involve observation, interviews, focus groups, close readings of extant texts and in some cases a mix of all these. However, most researchers rely on interviewing as a primary strategy for data collection (Hermanowicz, 2002). Observation techniques can be a rich source of data but can often be impractical especially in health related research owing to its potential for intrusiveness and logistical difficulty (Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

While employing interviews, the phenomenological researcher very often uses semi- structured interviews (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). The goal in these interviews is to elicit the participant's story by facilitating an interaction, so it is the responsibility of the researcher to present themselves as a listener and ask probing questions to encourage the participant to elaborate on the details of the lived experience being investigated. At the same time the researcher should be careful not to be leading the discussion (Smith et al, 2009; Speziale et al, 2011). Interviewing is best seen as a relationship in which the researcher and the participant collaborate to construct a narrative experience of the world (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000).

The above recommendations were carefully considered while planning the data collection for the current study. I chose to work with Bhutanese former refugee youths and undertake the data collection myself because I came from the same part of the continent as them and had knowledge of their customs, traditions and mannerisms. All

the participants are youths and hence there was not a great age difference between my age and theirs, which facilitated them recounting their stories. The interviews were unstructured which reduced the pressure on participants to stick to a time frame. Even the interview topics were framed in a way that was easy to understand. Constant reflection on the data gathering process by taking down research notes after every interview ensured that any inappropriate or irrelevant questions could either be revised or discarded as required.

The literature on qualitative interviews has indicated that they have the potential to reveal narrative representations of social experiences and elucidate the meanings these have for the speaker (Mathison & Freeman, 2009). Hence in phenomenological research it is imperative that the meanings which are generated must be the result of co-creation between the researcher and the participants because participants are to be viewed as co-authors of the research and not mere repositories of data (Moustakas, 1994; Knox & Burkard, 2009). This was another benefit of adopting an unstructured interview in my thesis because whenever a participant referred to something that I could not decipher I was able to seek a clarification – which ensured that the meaning of events in the narrative were not assigned by me.

Open ended questions have been found to be helpful in facilitating phenomenological interviews mainly because they allow the researcher to follow the participant's lead, and the researcher can always seek more clarity by asking more questions (Speziale et al, 2011). While adopting van Manen's method of phenomenological analysis, care should be taken that while conducting interviews the focus is not on perceptions, views, beliefs or interpretations but rather on lived experience descriptions (LEDs) (van, Manen, 2014). I kept these guidelines in mind while framing my own interview questions. To provide an example a question like "what is your opinion on the lives of Bhutanese youth living in the refugee camps in Nepal?" is good for some types of qualitative enquiry but not for phenomenology. The answer elicited by this question would fail a phenomenological analysis for a lack of substance. On the other hand questions like "Can you remember what it was like for you living in the refugee camps in Nepal? Can you think back and remember any particular incidents?" would fit well within a phenomenological framework.

Max van Manen (2014) further states that for phenomenological reflection analysis to take place two critical conditions need to be met – the appropriateness of the research question and the experiential quality of the data. Since I chose to adopt van Manen's method of phenomenological analysis these two factors were most important to my research. It was my task as a researcher to frame not only my research questions but even my interview questions (since they were my main method of gathering data) in such a way that the lived meanings of resettlement and experiencing a natural disaster of the Bhutanese youth were experientially recognisable and accessible (van Manen, 2014).

In my research the interview questions were framed in an open-ended way and an unstructured manner was followed for the interviews. Reflections were noted down after each interview and transcription also began shortly thereafter. It is a commitment of a qualitative researcher to begin the analysis of the data at the same time as its collection; this process was also followed in this research. Analysing the initial data provides the benefit of checking on the appropriateness of the questions and observing participants' responses to the questions. One of the changes that occurred in my thesis as a result of the initial data analysis was an adjustment of the focus of the study to include descriptions of previously used or discovered coping strategies in addition to mindfulness and counselling. Even though coping was not planned to be included in the initial phase of the research, it was found that coping was emerging as a prominent pattern in the responses of these Bhutanese youths; hence it was added as a focus in the research question. As a result of this addition, some questions had to be added that would give the participants a chance to talk about their own ways of coping with resettlement and the earthquakes.

In terms of sampling, phenomenological research commonly relies on purposive sampling to generate data. In this method participants are selected based on their particular knowledge of a phenomenon for the purpose of sharing that knowledge (Speziale et al, 2011). According to Patton (1990):

"The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling".

Sample size in qualitative research studies depends on five things: the scope of the study, the nature of the topic, the quality of the data, the study design and the use of shadowed data *[when participants speak of others' experience as well as their own]* (Morse, 2000). In phenomenology data are most often gathered through interviews or focus groups, though sometimes various other types of texts may be used. The concept (or experience) under study is the unit of analysis. Given that a person is capable of generating thousands of concepts, large samples are not a necessity to generate rich data sets (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, Kleiman, 2004).

Phenomenological researchers are interested in common features of the lived experience. A diverse sample might provide a broader range of themes, however even data from a few individuals who have experienced the same phenomenon might suffice to uncover the core elements of the phenomenon. A typical sample size for a phenomenological study can range from one to ten persons (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). However, it should also be pointed out that predetermining the number of participants for a study is impossible because a researcher must continue to generate data until saturation has been reached i.e. until she finds that there are no new themes emerging from the participants and the findings are repetitious (Speziale et al, 2011). For my study I decided to gather data in three phases from up to 10 different participants who were in the age group of 18 to 24 years and who identified as having Bhutanese refugee backgrounds. Purposive sampling was the method deemed to be appropriate to recruit the participants.

Phenomenological analysis

The process of data analysis begins at the same time as the data collection and remains inseparable from it throughout the research process. From the moment researchers begin listening to descriptions of a particular phenomenon, analysis is occurring (Speziale et al, 2011). A researcher must immerse himself or herself in the data yet must constantly engage in "bracketing'. Bracketing is a self-reflective process by which the researcher sets aside (but does not abandon) their prior knowledge and assumptions. This is done so that the participant's stories can be attended to with an open mind (Gearing, 2004; Sokolowski, 2000; van Manen, 1990; Streubert, 2011).

Additional reflective practices include consulting with colleagues and mentors and writing memos (Cutcliffe, 2000).

Van Manen's method of phenomenology provides little structure around bracketing. So for this part I will borrow from the method of analysis outlined by Moustakas (1994). As a first step to phenomenological analysis Moustakas sets out that a researcher must describe personal experiences with the phenomenon under study including their own experience of the phenomenon. This process is carried out so that the researcher can give voice to his own feelings, but for the analysis still to direct the focus to the participants (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2013). While I don't have any experience of being a refugee, nor have I experienced the Canterbury earthquakes, I still have experience of being a youth counsellor and mindfulness practitioner and I have written about these as well as my experience of the ways youth respond to counselling, at the outset of my thesis.

Interpreting data in a phenomenological study is an iterative, inductive process of de-contextualization and re-contextualization (Ayres, Kavanaugh & Knafl, 2003; Morse & Field, 1995). During de-contextualization the analyst separates data from the original context of individual cases and assigns themes to units of meaning in the texts. In re-contextualization the researcher examines the themes for patterns and then reintegrates the data to capture the 'essence' of the phenomenon being studied. According to Van Manen (2014), the 'essence' of an experience is what helps explore the phenomenon in detail by also offering some possible interpretations of it, such that a reader is better able to understand the depth of the phenomenon.

Max van Manen's method of phenomenological analysis does not provide a rigid structure but encourages creativity while interpreting the data (van Manen, 1990). The first step, as proposed by van Manen, is uncovering thematic aspects of the descriptions of lived experiences (van Manen, 1990). In my research the descriptions take the form of transcribed taped audio interviews. Van Manen has proposed three approaches to uncovering thematic aspects of a phenomenon.

I – the wholistic or sententious approach

II – the selective or highlighting approach

III – the detailed or line-by-line approach

In the wholistic approach the researcher attends to the text as a whole and tries to pick out a sentence that can capture the fundamental meaning of the text as a whole. However van Manen also points out that this is an extremely judgement-based call as different readers might come up with different fundamental meanings and one interpretation cannot be judged as being truer than another. There is a possibility with this method to come up with errors and to come up with idiosyncratic meanings (van Manen, 1990; Cresswell, 2007).

In the selective approach the researcher listens to or reads the text several times and tries to come up with a statement or phrase that reveals the phenomenon or the experience being described. In the detailed or line-by-line approach the researcher is faced with looking at every single sentence or sentence cluster and tries to figure out what it reveals about the phenomenon being described (Tesch, 1944; van Manen, 1990). According to Tesch (1944) these two methods can be described with the analogy of panning and surveying. The selective approach is like panning because the researcher who adopts it is looking for 'precious material' within the text that directly pertains to the nature of the phenomenon and all other material is 'sifted out' or not included in the analysis. The line-by-line approach is similar to the process of land surveying because the researcher has to look at each square inch of his territory i.e. the data and try and capture whatever is there while making sure nothing has been missed out (Tesch, 1944).

From the above three methods I decided to adopt the line-by-line approach. It appeared to be the most tedious of the three because all my transcripts would need to be analysed one line at a time. However, the benefit of using this method was that it really facilitated my delving deep into the data and meaningfully bearing witness to the lives of the Bhutanese former refugee youths, especially since this is the first study that gives them a chance to tell their stories. While both the selective and the line-by-line phenomenological methods have been found to be disciplined, systematic and rigorous (Tesch, 1944) I also acknowledge that any qualitative analysis is highly subjective and the researcher is the main (and often the only) instrument for making judgements about the coding and categorizing of the data (Gearing, 2004; Sokolowski, 2000; van Manen, 1990). Such being the case, it is quite possible that had I opted for a wholistic or selective method of analysis I might have missed out something important in my data and excluded potential themes.

As I mentioned earlier I made every attempt to try and bracket out my prior assumptions about refugee youth and youth responses to counselling but at the same time I acknowledge that I may not be able to set these aside completely. If I were to use a wholistic or selective method of analysis it might have been possible that I started 'looking out' for particular themes and approached my data already knowing what I wanted to see in it. The line-by-line approach literally forced me to look at every square inch of data in front of me which led to a deeper understanding of the patterns in the participants' narratives which I might have missed, had I adopted one of the other methods.

Phenomenological writing

Van Manen (1990) has asserted that phenomenological analysis is primarily a writing exercise, as it is through the process of writing and rewriting that the researcher can give meaning to the data. The first step, theme formulation, is an important part of the analysis but it is only the starting point. An accurate analysis will occur in the process of writing and rewriting the phenomenological text itself (van Manen, 2014). In the current study my intention was to achieve this through writing (and rewriting) up the findings from the narratives until the true 'essence' of the participants experiences had been captured and portrayed.

The phenomenological researcher is also faced with the task of making intelligible meaning of experiences that are explored in a "feelingly understanding" manner. A person reading the research for the first time has to feel that she has vicariously experienced the phenomenon under study and should ideally be able to envision herself coming to similar conclusions about what it means (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Van Manen (2014) recommends the process of draft writing to help instil and internalize a phenomenological disposition for interpreting, seeing, sensing, and reflecting on lived experiences. He has proposed some of the following draft writing exercises and I shall briefly write about each of them. The researcher is the one who is faced with the task of transforming the data into meaningful interpretations through the art of writing (Reinharz, 1983) hence the words researcher and writer are used interchangeably below.

- Heuristic writing – this style of writing attempts to evoke wonder in the reader through a single or a few small paragraphs. The writer must strive to maintain this sense of wonder in all versions of his draft and also in the full-fledged text. It can be a challenge as even the writer may not yet have grasped the true enigmatic and deep nature of the question that he is pursuing. But when achieved it can open up many profound questions that make the reader wonder about the meaning of human existence.

- Experiential writing – this style of writing emphasizes the 'pushing off' of theory and inserting lived experience material into the text. This is achieved by extracting quotes and phrases from the transcripts. The writer who adopts this method relies mostly on verbatim extracts from his participant's transcriptions to make sense of the phenomenon. However the writer while doing this should be careful to keep his examples recognizable and compelling.

- Thematic draft writing – in this method the themes that have been generated in the first step of analysis are taken and converted into narrative passages. The writing in general needs to focus on essential thematic insights. The phrases or words that appear to get at the heart of the phenomenon may be used by the writer as headings, side headings and leading lines.

- Insight-cultivating draft writing – this style of writing drafts is enabled by reflections on sources that draw on other scholarly phenomenological and related texts. Insights into the data are obtained by metaphorically reading relevant literature.

- Vocative draft writing – this style of writing makes use of poetic and other creative elements to help bring to the surface non-intentional meanings that are difficult to capture in rational discourses of the text. Writers who adopt this method take relevant anecdotes, fragments, selective material from literature, art and mythology and eloquently suture in into their text to give it a deeper meaning.

- Inceptual draft writing – writers who adopt this method try to give their readers a taste of deeper sensibilities of their phenomenon. This style articulates deeper speculative and sometimes surprising insights about the meaning of life. It is quite an esoteric style of writing and in a way involves the writer making a judgement about a phenomenon and encouraging his readers to question their own beliefs (van den Berg, 1966).

From these writing approaches I was faced with making a choice as to which one would best fit my phenomenon being researched. It was a logical temptation to embrace the thematic style of writing especially since the analysis process involved extracting themes from the data by doing a line-by-line interpretation and it would serve the research well to use these themes to write about the lives of the Bhutanese youths. But van Manen has pointed out that phenomenological writing is not a mechanical process, and requires a creative sense of logic as well as textual tact (van Manen, 1990; 2001; 2014). Hence, I began my writing by attempting all the writing styles suggested by van Manen to determine which one would be best suited to the goals of my thesis. At this stage I observed that the experiential draft writing method facilitated the illustration of the 'essence' of the participants' narratives by using their own words and this kept their voices alive throughout the writing. After attempting the different styles and receiving feedback from my supervisors, I decided to adopt this one, which is presented in subsequent chapters

Methods

In this section I will describe the processes that went into gaining ethical approval to begin my research and how I worked towards making contact with and recruiting participants from the resettled Bhutanese former refugee community in Christchurch. Following this I will also describe the methods that were used in the data collection process – phenomenological interviews - and also the method in which the counselling sessions were undertaken. Finally, I describe the way in which the data were analysed.

Paving the way – Gaining ethical approval

As a student at the University of Canterbury, my first commitment was to obtain ethical approval for gathering my data. This was obtained from the Human Ethics Committee at the University. The process of obtaining ethical approval and the changes in my research goals that were brought about as a result of meeting ethical requirements are described in the section below.

The first ethical challenge was that participants may not be able to give honest responses in the interviews. The issue was that the relationship developed through my offer of mindfulness and counselling sessions would affect participants' ability to give honest responses after the sessions. The participants may have been reluctant to give me any negative comments or even report if the process had no effect on them and this would be an added pressure on them. Not being able to offer the participants an opportunity to be frank posed an ethical dilemma.

One option to tackle this challenge was to cease interactions with the participants after the final counselling sessions and have the post-counselling interviews done by a research assistant. This costly option was not taken up, as a resolution appeared during the initial data analysis phase when it was found that coping was emerging as a prominent pattern among the Bhutanese youths' responses. By changing the focus from an evaluation of my counselling to the youth's coping strategies and how counselling had impacted them, it became acceptable for me to do the post-counselling interviews.

The next challenge that presented itself was the issue of recording the interviews and counselling sessions. As a researcher I decided that I wanted to have all my interviews audio recorded. I sought out prior consent for this from my participants and all gave consent for this. But a more complex ethical concern was around recording the counselling sessions. Although counsellors often seek permission to record counselling sessions, for clinical supervision or for use by the clients, when the recording is for research purposes, there is an added dimension that it may have an impact on clients' ability to use their counselling without restriction, and this was observed in research conducted by Gossman and Miller (2012). However, since the goal of my research was to explore the participants' experiences of coping after attending mindfulness-infused

counselling and not to evaluate the counselling process it was decided that the counselling sessions did not need to be recorded – which resulted in a resolution of this issue.

In keeping with another ethical commitment, the participants were asked if they wanted to be called by their real names or a pseudonym during the interview. If they opted for a pseudonym they were asked to pick one for themselves. Some participants opted to be called by a pseudonym but others didn't mind being called by their real names especially since they were assured that all identities would be preserved while transcribing the interviews and writing up the thesis. Irrespective of their choices, all participants were assigned a pseudonym at the time of transcribing the interviews and within this thesis they are referred to by their pseudonyms only.

A further ethical issue that was addressed was my dual relationship with my participants first as a researcher and subsequently as their counsellor. After consulting the counsellor's code of ethics laid down by the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC) it was determined that there is no real restriction on counsellors taking on dual roles with their clients. The actual wording of the clause is –

"Counsellors assume full responsibility for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a counselling relationship with a client and any other kind of relationship with that client and for making such boundaries as clear as possible to the client." (Section 5.11 on Multiple Relationships in NZAC code of ethics)

However, the second part of the clause states that -

"Counsellors should consult with their supervisor(s) when dual or multiple relationships arise."

So while dual relationships are not forbidden among counsellors in New Zealand, it is a commitment always to seek consultation on these relationships from a counselling supervisor. Counselling supervision is a formal relationship in which a trainee or qualified counsellor presents his or her client work as a way of learning how to work more effectively with clients (Grant, 1998). The primary purpose of counselling supervision is to ensure the counsellor is addressing the needs of the client (BAC, 1998). In addition to the above, counselling supervision in my research was necessary to ensure that that the research part was kept separate from the counselling sessions and

that the clients were able to perceive the difference in my role as a counsellor and a researcher.

In the current research, my senior supervisor is also a professional counsellor licensed with the NZAC and provided me with counselling supervision along with academic supervision throughout my candidature.

All these factors were strategically considered and an application was made to the ethics committee. Approval was granted in early December 2014 (See Appendix for approval letter).

Needles in the haystack – Gaining access to the Bhutanese refugee community in Christchurch

Accessing the resettled Bhutanese community in Christchurch was another task that had to be achieved as they were to be the experts in the field of my research. This step is described in the following section.

Since the focus of my doctoral study was refugee youth, I sought advice from students with completed theses, and senior doctoral students and academics, who were either working with or had worked with persons of a refugee background. One thing that all of them had in common was the support of the Canterbury Refugee Council (CRC). It seemed pragmatic to have the backing of such an organization because when attempting to make contact with a vulnerable section of the population it is imperative that they perceive you with trust rather than caution. Since the CRC is the organization from where they receive their aid and support I recognized the need to make contact with key personnel early on.

I began attending the refugee public forums which were held in the city and began making contact with key leaders and explaining to them my research ideas. These discussions proved fruitful and were met with enthusiasm and support. One of the key leaders who expressed an interest in my study was the Youth Co-ordinator and spokesperson of the CRC and the leader of the refugee youth network in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Through her support I was put in touch with the Chairman of the CRC who

welcomed my plan to conduct the research with the people in Christchurch and assured me of all the support they were able to provide.

Another commitment that had to be honoured in the ethical application of the University of Canterbury was the obligation to maintain community consultation and continually obtain ethnically appropriate advice, particularly while working with a vulnerable community. The Youth Spokesperson agreed to provide the relevant information in this regard and hence at this stage she was officially appointed to my supervisory panel. Having a leader from the refugee community on my supervisory panel was deemed to be a necessary step towards convincing the community that my research was indeed supported by one of their leaders in Christchurch, and this was also an important part of building up the refugee community's trust in me as a relative stranger.

The next decision that had to be made concerned which refugee communities would be included in my research. New Zealand currently hosts refugees from over 55 different countries and prior to the great Canterbury earthquakes many were sent to live in Christchurch (RQB statistics, 2017). I decided to work with the resettled Bhutanese refugee community and my reasons for this are outlined in the first chapter. This decision was endorsed by the person acting as bi-lingual liaison officer for the Bhutanese refugees at the time. He supported my view that I would be met with little or no resistance when working with this group owing to my being a young adult, and furthermore he offered to support in recruitment of participants.

Before recruiting potential participants it was decided that for practical, ethical and academic reasons there had to be certain criteria that the participants met before being invited to participate in this study. This complied with Moustakas' (1994) point that, in phenomenological research participants must be selected who have experienced the phenomenon.

All the participants in this research were born in the refugee camps in Nepal and their age at resettlement ranged from 11 to 16 years. Their families had all been resettled in New Zealand through the UNHCR quota in the years 2008 and 2009 and they all spent their first six weeks in Mangere centre. Given that every refugee has experienced resettlement, the key criterion for selection was experience of the major earthquakes from 2010 to 2012 – which all the participants satisfied. The next criterion was that the

participants had to be unmarried individuals between 18 and 24 years old. The cut-off in this research was kept at 24 years, keeping in mind cultural roles and the ages around which the Nepali/Bhutanese people tend to get married. People in cultures like the Bhutanese do not usually identify as being youth after marriage. Once married, they perceive themselves to be adults with adult responsibilities and hence would be uncomfortable being called youth. Persons below the age of 18 were not invited to take part in this research for two reasons: the first was that it was deemed impractical as these persons would have been very young when they left Nepal and came to Christchurch and may not have remembered much of that part of their lives. The second reason why those below 18 could not be a part of this research is because the University of Canterbury does not permit its students to carry out research with minors without the written consent of their parents. This would be difficult to obtain primarily due to the issues with language (discussed elsewhere in this chapter).

Other criteria for exclusion were participants suffering from any form of intellectual disability, as they may be also unable to give informed consent; and people already receiving any form of counselling services. Since I was going to be exploring any impacts of counselling on the coping mechanisms of the youth in my study, I had to be sure that any effects they reported were from the services provided by me and not from some other counselling service. And the final criterion was that all prospective participants were to be able to communicate without the help of an interpreter.

The two main persons who agreed to refer interested participants to me were the then Youth Co-ordinator and spokesperson of the CRC (now acting in the capacity of associate supervisor) and the Bhutanese bi-lingual liaison officer. Both of them were given appropriate information about the study through formal letters and information sheets (refer to Appendices for a sample) and they briefly explained my research to the participants who met my inclusion criteria, and obtained their consent to be referred to me. Once consent had been obtained from interested participants, their contact details were passed on to me. I then made formal contact with my prospective participants and explained my study to them in detail, usually in a face-to-face meeting organized at a time and place of their convenience.

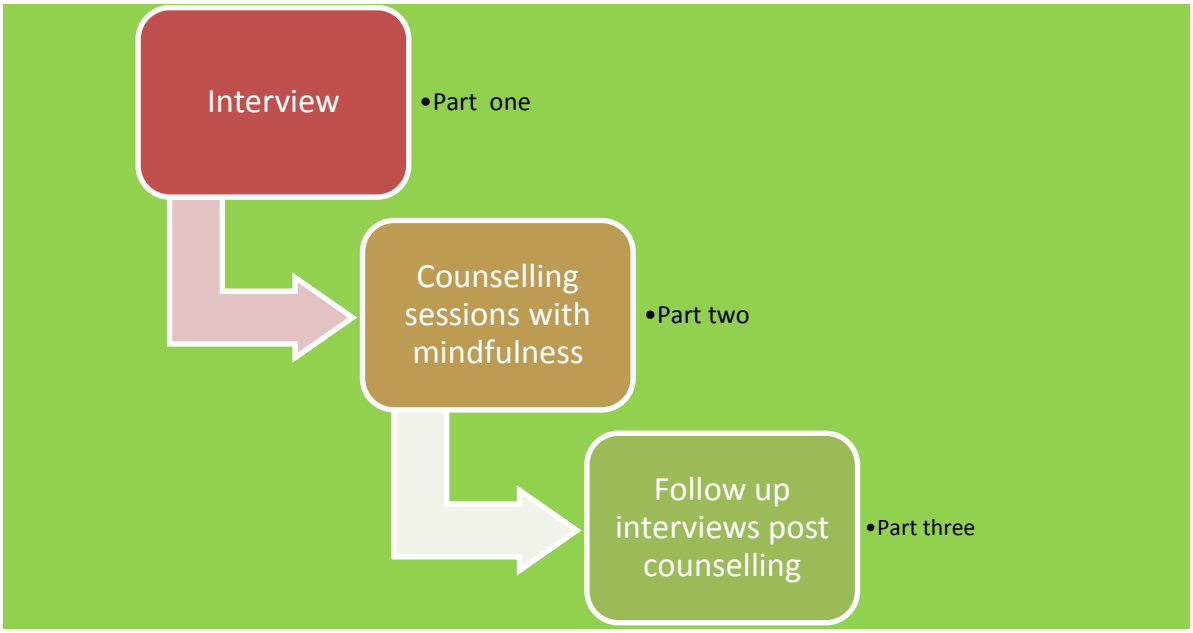
As per my agreement with the Human Ethics Committee I was to give all participants 10 days after meeting with them to decide if they wanted to be my

participants or not. I also agreed not to report back to the person who referred them to me about whether they agreed to be participants or not, so as to minimise coercion and to preserve the element of confidentiality. These commitments were strictly maintained right through the data collection process.

A total of eight Bhutanese youth accepted the invitation to be research participants and came forward to be a part of the interviews and counselling sessions. Two participants could not complete their counselling sessions. One of them got engaged to be married and with all the preparations for her wedding was unable to come to the sessions. The other participant was an only child and had too many household responsibilities in addition to a full-time job and hence could not continue coming in for the sessions. Both the participants who withdrew were happy for me to use their interviews as data and did not request that it be removed from the study. The remaining six participants completed the counselling sessions and came in for a final follow-up interview. It was decided after the preliminary analysis that the data obtained from six participants had generated sufficient themes in the analysis and saturation of data had been achieved, so more participants were not recruited.

Tools of the trade – methods of inquiry

The structure in which I collected data in my research is presented diagrammatically below (see next page) –



There were three parts in total and informed consent for all three stages was obtained from each participant at the outset. In the following section I have discussed the techniques of gathering the required data.

The first step in a phenomenological inquiry is transforming people's experiences into language. During this step, the researcher, through verbal interaction creates an opportunity for the lived experience to be shared (Reinharz, 1983). In my research I have chosen to create this opportunity through inviting the Bhutanese youth to share their stories in semi-structured personal interviews.

According to Mutch (2005), a semi-structured interview is a process where a set of guiding questions is used but where the interview is open to changes along the way. Thus a phenomenological interview can be seen as an informal interaction where a set of questions are prepared in advance but these are often altered along the way if a participant finds an alternate way of sharing an experience (Tapper, 2014). This was seen in the interview with my participant Lisa, when she was asked to talk about her journey from Nepal to New Zealand and the things she packed; instead of giving a verbal response she pulled out from her bag a photo album and said "This is what I brought". Then she proceeded to display the photographs and explain who the people were and what the structures were. Lisa had answered the question that was put to her but in a way that was different to what would be stereotypically expected.

Method of conducting the interviews

Once a potential participant had been identified and referred to me, I made contact with them over the phone and explained who I was and what my research was about. It was important also to mention that I had obtained their details from one of the respected leaders, so that they would not start with a state of wariness towards me.

The next step was arranging a face-to-face meeting with them at their convenience and giving them the necessary information sheets (See Appendix for example) and explaining in detail what was required of them should they choose to participate. My associate supervisor accompanied me to the homes of participants recommended by her. Thus, considering I was a complete stranger to these young men and women, I found them open to listening to me and considering my request since a person they knew and trusted was supporting me.

Another point to be noted in phenomenological interviews is the importance of rapport with the participants. Speziale et al (2011) noted that the researcher is the tool for data collection and must be able to function in such a way that participants are comfortable expressing their experiences. Establishing a good rapport with the participants is the first step to ensure that there is a smooth flow in the conversation between the researcher and the participant (Tapper, 2014). This process of meeting with them and speaking with them before the actual interview served to make a connection with them and create a rapport so there was at least some level of comfort and trust when they came to their first interview. And this trust and their comfort with speaking were seen to increase with every session.

Some of the participants were referred by their friends or relatives who had already been my participants and as such had already been told what the research was about and were keen to come to the interviews and counselling as well. These participants also were invited to an informal meeting and were given time to go through the information sheet and ask any questions that they had before scheduling an interview.

Research participants always need to be provided with a safe environment that offers them the opportunity to express their opinions freely (Mathison & Freeman, 2009). The participants were offered the opportunity to have their interviews and counselling sessions either at the School of Health Sciences where I had my office, or on the premises of Hagley community college where most of them were studying or had studied in the past. These premises were ones that afforded privacy and where participants could speak confidentially. Most participants choose to come to the University to be interviewed and for their counselling sessions. Only one participant indicated that she would like to have her sessions at my associate supervisor's office where she felt more comfortable.

To allow the participants to describe their experiences freely and also in accordance with phenomenological research the interviews were not constrained by a time limit. Each interview was started with an informal discussion so that I could get to know each participant and make them feel a bit relaxed. Before beginning the interview they were asked to sign and return a consent form. They were also reminded that they were being recorded but no one apart from the researcher and the supervisors would have access to the recording. It was explained to them that they were being recorded so that I could listen to the interview multiple times for my research and so that I didn't have to ask them to keep repeating things. They were also reminded that they had the right to withdraw at any time and/or stop or pause the interview whenever and if ever they wanted to.

The interviews were not scheduled in quick succession. Rather, each interview was transcribed and a preliminary analysis was conducted before setting up the interview with the next participant. This provided sufficient time for reflection and observation of participants' responses to the questions. It was during this stage that coping strategies were found to be a prominent topic discussed by the participants and hence some questions were added and others adjusted so as to give a sufficient platform for the participants to discuss their ways of coping. All participants were also able to cover all the topics outlined in the schedule in one interview.

The participants who completed the counselling sessions were also invited to a follow-up interview to explore any impact of the counselling on their coping mechanisms. By this time there was sufficient rapport between me and them and hence

there were no expressed concerns either before or after the interview. The participants did not display any nervousness or hesitation while answering the questions and reported expressing themselves completely. The follow-up interviews took a relatively shorter time primarily because there were fewer topics to be discussed and also because the participants reported feeling comfortable enough to answer directly and not change their words to sound better (Refer to Appendices).

Field notes were written after each interview in a research diary that I maintained. This was to augment the process of data collection with my thoughts and reflections on what transpired in the interview. It was decided to write down these reflections after the interviews so as not to distract the participants and also not to give them a reason to feel distrustful or uncomfortable. The diary was stored in a lockable cabinet at the School of Health Sciences along with other confidential research material. All the interviews were transcribed verbatim and were then offered to the participants for checking and/or alterations before doing any analysis. None of the participants wanted anything changed in their transcripts and were happy with whatever had been discussed at the time of the interview.

The Mindfulness-infused Counselling sessions

As written earlier in this section and throughout my thesis, the mindfulness infused counselling sessions were offered as a free service to the Bhutanese youths. The rationale for this was because person-centred counselling offered them an opportunity to talk about their lives, and the practice of mindfulness was justified as a non-obtrusive practice. Neither the service nor its effects were being evaluated in this research, but it was part of the data collection because the goal was to glean an understanding of the coping mechanisms of the Bhutanese youth and I wanted to explore whether the counselling and the mindfulness had any impact on their coping mechanisms. In this section details on how the counselling process was actually conducted have been presented.

Informed consent had already been obtained from the participants before they were invited to counselling. All counselling sessions took place in the therapy clinics of the University's School of Health Sciences. After a date and time for the session had

been negotiated the participants were invited to the University. Since they had already met with me, researcher, a few times and had also been interviewed, they were fairly comfortable and relaxed when they came in.

Since the session timings were always pre-arranged, clinic space was booked in advance and hence there was always a clinic ready for the participants as soon as they arrived and they never had to spend time in the waiting area. This proved to be a good facilitator for the counselling because waiting outside a clinic room in anticipation often brings back memories of waiting at the doctor's room and might have caused some anxiety in my participants. As soon as a participant arrived he/she was escorted by me (now playing the role of counsellor) to the clinic. The initial few minutes were spent making small talk and offering a drink of water to the participants.

After this I explained what would be taking place. As already communicated in the information sheets given to the participants earlier, it was repeated that they would be offered a space to talk about anything of their choice. It was also explained to them that this process of talking things out with a relative stranger is found helpful by some because it offers the person talking a chance to view the matter they talk about in a different way and in the presence of a supportive, encouraging and respectful counsellor. I also explained that they would be practicing a bit of mindfulness during the session. A brief history of what mindfulness is and how it is used was given to the participants. The participants were also reminded that they were not being recorded in any way and that they had the full right to stop the session at any time.

Once this had been explained and the participants were given a chance to ask any questions they had, the session formally began. The first few minutes of the session were spent doing a mindfulness exercise which was guided by me. The participants were asked to sit in a comfortable position either on a chair or on the floor – as they desired. They were then asked to fold their hands comfortably either on their laps or anywhere else they found comfortable. The participants were then asked to breathe deeply and while doing so to give full attention to their breathing, they were informed that they did not need to alter their breathing style or pattern in any way but rather observe it as it occurs naturally. The participants were also told to shut their eyes if they felt comfortable or else to leave them open. The exercise then proceeded with the client being guided to give attention to their bodies and the postures they were sitting in.

Clients were also guided to give attention to the floor, all the while keeping their breathing deep and their eyes gently shut (unless they indicated they were not comfortable doing so). The guided instructions were not given in quick succession but after a gap of about 40 to 60 seconds allowing the client to process and follow each prompt. At the end of the exercise the client was asked to once again focus on their breathing and then to open their eyes when they were ready.

The mindfulness exercise described above is what modern practitioners call the 'mindfulness of breathing' exercise which uses one's breath as an object of concentration (van der Oord et al, 2011; Kang et al, 2009). The first mindfulness session with the participants lasted about six minutes. From the second session onwards the mindfulness exercise was of a longer duration lasting between 10 to 12 minutes. Subsequent mindfulness exercises all began the same way, as described above, but additionally incorporated a listening element where participants are guided to listen to the sounds in their environment and also any sounds from within their body. Participants were informed in advance that their thoughts might wander during the exercises and this is completely normal in mindfulness practice. While the sessions in this research were not recorded, the full guided meditations that were used to inform and guide my sessions can be found at marc.ucla.edu (refer to Appendix for an example).

After the mindfulness exercise, the clients were always asked how they were feeling and the response was almost always that they were ok and ready to continue the session. Since the participants had never been to counselling before they usually then looked to the counsellor to give them a lead or tell them what to say. The counsellor at this point encouraged them to share a bit more about their lives in Nepal and here in New Zealand. This proved to be a sufficient prompt for the participants and they were able to steer the direction of their sessions after this.

In keeping with the tenets of humanistic psychology my role as the counsellor during the sessions was not to offer advice or solutions but to regard whatever the participants told me with unconditional positive regard and ask them to reflect on their feelings for the events they discussed. All sessions lasted about 60 minutes each. The last few minutes of the session were spent doing another guided mindfulness exercise which was the same one that was used at the beginning of the session. After the session

ended the counsellor engaged the participant in a conversation about an unrelated topic. This is part of the counsellor's commitment to not let the client leave in a harrowed or disturbed state of mind. After this the participant was allowed to leave and the counsellor made contact with them later to arrange a time for the subsequent session.

At every subsequent session the participant was first asked a pre-session question to determine what, if anything, they perceived to be different in themselves since their last session. Their response was noted down later in the counsellor's reflection diary. The session then proceeded in the same way as the previous one described above. Each participant was offered up to five such sessions at no cost. They were also invited to participate in another interview after they completed their sessions so as to explore any perceived impacts to their ways of coping.

All participants chose to come in for the five offered sessions. The final session proceeded like all the preceding ones. But at the end of the last session the participants were reminded that they were welcome to request more sessions if they wanted to and these extra sessions would be free of cost and would not be counted as part of my research. While the participants were thankful for this offer none requested more than the five offered sessions. The participants were also invited to participate in one final interview which took place within three to five weeks at a time of their convenience.

Below is a table showing the timeline for the interviews and the counselling sessions. It should be noted that the counselling sessions were spread out for each participant as well as across participants. This was mainly to accommodate the availability of the participants and also to give sufficient time for the counsellor to reflect on the content of the sessions and seek appropriate supervision.

Participant	**Interview**	**Session 1**	**Session 2**	**Session 3**	**Session 4**	**Session 5**	**Follow-up Interview**
Madhuri *	05/02/15	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
Riyaz	17/02/15	17/03/15	25/03/15	31/03/15	09/04/15	13/04/15	26/05/15

Lavanya	09/04/15	30/04/15	08/05/15	14/05/15	28/05/15	05/06/15	06/02/15
Saki	09/04/15	30/04/15	08/05/15	14/05/15	28/05/15	05/06/15	06/02/15
Adam	03/06/15	10/06/15	17/06/15	24/06/15	02/07/15	08/07/15	18/08/15
Lisa	11/08/15	18/08/15	25/08/15	02/09/15	09/09/15	16/09/15	12/10/15
Drishya	01/10/15	19/11/15	27/11/15	09/12/15	06/01/16	15/01/16	15/02/16
Lucy *	18/06/16	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**

** - Participant dropped out of the study*

Lavanya and Saki chose to come in for their sessions together hence their dates are the same. Sessions were conducted individually for both

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was an on-going process in this thesis. Transcriptions, writing field notes, writing reflections after the counselling sessions, generating themes from the transcripts and attempting to describe the themes as essences of experiences, were all part of the data analysis process. All of these processes have been described in this section.

Field notes were taken down after each interview. The content of the field notes were mainly my observations during the interviews of the participants, and my ways of establishing rapport and interviewing. Even details of the interviewing space that might have influenced the nature of the interview were noted down. These notes served to help preserve the tone of the interview as the analysis and writing of the results progressed.

Each interview was transcribed verbatim immediately upon completion. I transcribed all the interviews on my own. Immediate transcription helped me pick out the recurring patterns in the stories of the Bhutanese youths. It also helped me to consider modifying and introducing necessary changes to the structure of the interview. Participants thus could also be offered a copy of the transcription for checking soon after the interview. Maintaining a research diary and personally transcribing my own interviews were steps towards achieving what Streubert (2011) refers to as 'immersion' in one's data.

Once the transcription was complete and the participants had checked their transcripts the formal analysis began. The analysis in my research is informed by van Manen's line-by-line approach (van Manen, 1990). This form of analysis is another step towards my getting immersed in my data. I began by inserting spaces after each line or paragraph spoken by the participant and then I entered my interpretations of these spoken lines into the blank spaces (see Appendix for an example). In this way each line spoken by the participant was analysed by me. Any observations about the questions or my methods as an interviewer were noted in my research diary. After the entire transcript had been analysed I began looking for patterns of responses within the transcript, and began generating themes from these patterns.

At this stage I entered my transcript into the analysing software Nvivo version 10. Generating themes across transcripts and even multiple themes in the same transcript can become quite challenging if attempted solely on paper hence it becomes necessary to have software like Nvivo that organizes and easily displays the themes and the lines on the transcript from which it was extracted. The same process was followed for all eight transcripts. It was found that there were many patterns that had been repeated across participants and these were all then grouped under one main node (the word for theme in Nvivo). Sub-nodes were created within nodes as required. It should

be noted that the process of analysis did not end by generating nodes through Nvivo – since the goal was not to generate themes from the narratives. Creating the nodes, however helped in deriving the essences contained within the participants' narratives. Using Nvivo was helpful until the stage of grouping the themes into nodes but after that came the task of deciphering the essences and writing about them, all of which had to be done on paper – and without the help of any software. I should also point out that I have two sets of interview data – one from before the sessions and one from after the sessions. The same method of analysis was followed for both the interviews.

The next step in the analysis (as mentioned above) was to describe the themes by writing them up, because as van Manen (1990) points out, phenomenological analysis is mainly an exercise in writing. The first step in the writing is for the researcher to 'bracket' his or her own assumptions and his experiences with the phenomenon being studied – which I have done in chapter one. After this the task is to describe the themes. The prominent themes that emerged during the analysis were then described as the essence of the experiences of the participants, using the experiential draft writing method – which makes use of excerpts from the participants' narratives. These writings are presented in the two chapters that follow. Chapter five presents the findings and the essence of the participants' narratives of their lives in the refugee camp, their accounts of resettlement and their experiences of the first series of earthquakes in their lives. Chapter six presents the participants' lived accounts of their experience of mindfulness-infused counselling, and the participants' perception of whether the process had any influence on them.

Chapter Summary

This chapter began with my rationale for opting for qualitative methods and this was followed by a discussion of relevant major methods of qualitative research. In these discussions I also included the reasons why each of these qualitative methods may not have been a good fit with my research questions. Following this, I described the chosen methodology, phenomenology, in detail. Phenomenology was chosen because it was the method that facilitated my research goal of exploring the 'lived' experiences of the

Bhutanese youths as they resettled in Christchurch and experienced the great Canterbury earthquakes.

Next I described in detail the research procedures that were followed in the process of data collection for my thesis. Gaining ethical approval, recruiting the participants, and the method of transcribing the interviews were described in this section. This was followed by a section on how the counselling sessions were conducted, and way the mindfulness exercises were conducted with the participants. Lastly, the phenomenological way of analysing my data using the framework of Max van Manen was described. The purpose of this chapter was to describe the framework that informed the methodology and also the method used to gather the data. The data are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Five

Lived Experiences of the Participants

Overview

This chapter presents the research findings through the descriptions and interpretations of the lived experiences of the Bhutanese youths. The data have been organised into four sections. Although these sections were constructed by me, and the chronological manner in which I conducted the interviews, they were described by the participants as major life phases. In this section, I have used 'witnessing' as an approach and attempted to present these life phases as narrated by each participant so that their stories may be 'read and believed' (Papadopoulos, 2002).

Part one presents the participants' lived experiences of being in the refugee camp. The participants' narratives focus on their early childhood recollections of being born into and growing up within a refugee camp. While some participants have narrated their stories with a sense of desolation and frustration it should also be noted how they each find their own sunshine while living in the camp. While there is an acknowledgement that their lives were difficult there is also a sense of hope that they will somehow get by.

Part two presents the participants' lived narratives about having to leave the refugee camp. In this set of narratives the doleful tone became pronounced as all participants recalled this as the saddest time of their lives. Leaving for better lives overseas also meant leaving behind the lives and the people they had known and grown fond of since their births. A sense of 'dread' can also be interpreted in these narratives as most participants did not know where they were being taken and what they were to expect once they got there.

Part three captures the lived experiences of the participants as they found their footing in their new lives in New Zealand. The sense of dread continues within this section and is accompanied by despondency at missing loved ones. One can also witness their disgust and humour over being given foreign food for the first time. One

of the significant stressors for most participants during this time was their inability to speak or understand English. At the same time it can be witnessed how the participants cease to paint themselves as victims and begin to get hopeful for their new lives and the opportunity to improve their lives.

Part four paints a picture of the first major event in the lives of all participants after their resettlement – The Great Canterbury Earthquakes. This was a major saga for the participants as they came from a part of the world that, until then, had not experienced any earthquakes so when they experienced the first one in their lives none of them actually knew what it was. This section also captures how the participants found their hopes and dreams reduced to rubble along with most of the structures in the city.

As set out in the previous chapter, the 'experiential' style of phenomenological writing was adopted since this style highlights the voices of the participants. It should also be noted that even though all the major events in the lives of the Bhutanese former refugees were common to all of them, I have presented the findings as individual stories so as to honour the participants as individuals. The goal of this chapter is not to paint stereotypes of refugees or how they cope but rather to fulfil my phenomenological obligation by bearing witness to each participant's story.

Part One - The Experience of 'being' in the refugee camp

'The Collectivistic Struggle'

Lavanya's recollections of the refugee camp involve conjuring up an image of a very crowded place that appeared to her to be made up entirely of bamboo structures that were thatched with clay. Surrounding this 'bamboo and clay' forest was a natural forest that provided the border between the refugee camp and mainland Nepal thereby also demarcating the areas that the Nepalese locals and the Bhutanese refugees had to live in. Lavanya remembers that her life in the refugee camp was a constant battle with the unknown. As she recalled, "We had no electricity so we had to get firewood from the jungle, but it was very challenging because we didn't know whether we would come

back alive or not. We could have been eaten by animals or killed by the locals. It was hard."

Lavanya also recounts that this battle with the unknown and uncertainties applied to practically every aspect of their lives. She recalls that all it took was one heavy monsoon shower for their bamboo and clay houses to get damaged or washed away. Even their food supplies were rationed out to them by the UNHCR and Lavanya recalls that they had to be very careful how much of their rations they used to avoid being left hungry as the supply of food items was not regular. She also shared one of her life's heart-breaking experiences on being left hungry as a child.

"One day we had no food and I was a little girl, probably just six or seven years old. My mum put some stones in the fire saying that it's potatoes and that it's going to get cooked soon and then we can have something to eat.. And I waited and waited and kept asking "is it cooked yet? Is it cooked yet??" and that's how I fell asleep but you know? It was not a potato it was just a stone"

Lavanya got teary eyed when recounting this story. But now as a young adult she tells herself that that was her mother's way of giving her family hope. By just telling them that there was no food and they would starve the night might have made them give up, so instead their mother told them a lie in the hope that it would give them some hope and carry them forward to another day.

Not a day passed by in the refugee camp where they were not consumed by fear. Lavanya recounts that this fear was mostly of the local Nepalese. The locals harboured a great deal of resentment towards the refugees from Bhutan because they were perceived as latching onto Nepal's resources and living off a land that wasn't theirs. Lavanya recalls that the Nepalase just wanted to oust all the Bhutanese refugees, and because neither the Nepali nor the Bhutanese government was ready to accept the citizenship status of her people, they all remained trapped in the middle with no place to call their home. Lavanya recounts that a lot of her people were killed or tortured by the locals mostly while fighting over resources.

"There used to be lots of fights and stuff among people from the villages that were like the Nepali villages not the refugee ones. Yeah a lot of people got killed and many got bullied and abused and other stuff a lot, a lot of those things happened. When

we used to go to jungle it was mostly the people there that we were afraid of, they were the ones because of whom we would either come back to our camp or not."

Lavanya also remembers being confused and questioning her destiny as far back as her memory goes. She never understood why she, her family and her community had to face such injustice and torment. In her mind she perceived all people to be equal and she was always confused why some people in Nepal had easier lives and could live in comfort while her people were getting abused, starved and had to struggle to make it out of each day alive. As she says, "I used to always wonder like how come there are people who are not struggling and it's all good with them? Why is it only us? It was so unfair and I used to never understand that." The concept of a 'refugee' was completely unknown to Lavanya and she says that even though she was born and raised in a refugee camp she did not know what a refugee was and that she was one until after she had been resettled in New Zealand.

Lavanya compares her life in Nepal to playing a dangerous game. She recounts how her people had to play with death and other high penalties like torture and jail time on a daily basis just to survive. This for her resembled a dangerous game because unlike in ordinary games where nothing aversive happened to the one who lost, in this game the loser would die. Lavanya recounts how many of her people (including her own father) sought work outside the refugee camp in mainland Nepal, "if you go and tell people that you are from a refugee camp and stuff they are never going to give you a job. So it was very challenging and he took a lot of risks by saying that I am a citizen of here (of Nepal). If he got found out he could have gotten sent to jail and stuff for it."

But through the tide of her struggles and hardships Lavanya also found a way to keep moving forward and to motivate herself. While recounting her life in the camp Lavanya shared her personal mantra for survival,

"One thing I learned is that everyone's life was hard, it was very hard but we still managed to find happiness in it and it's not always about an easy life and stuff and just because you have that [material wealth] doesn't mean that you will find happiness it's about the people around you and stuff. Whatever the situation is you'll really find happiness if you look into it."

Lavanya also recounts that there were two major factors in her life that helped her deal with all the atrocities that she and her people faced in the camp. The first was

not focusing too much on their difficulties. She learned early in her life that the only way for her and her people to make it out of that place alive was to lose any self-centredness they had and focus instead of surviving and taking care of each other. As she says, "We just focus on surviving rather than wondering why things are happening to us and what's causing this." Every day survived in the camp was an achievement for her. The above account of camp inhabitants seeking work outside the refugee camp is an illustration of the people's focus on survival. The dangers that lay in front of them faded into the background when the focus became on procuring money and supplies rather than avoiding getting caught.

The second factor that helped her and her people cope with life in the camp was the deep connection they had with one another. She remembers the times when their houses would get washed away with rain storms and how all the neighbours would rush to the aid of the ones who had been affected. Even when someone from the camp got abused by the locals everyone would rush to their aid and stand up for him/her so that the locals knew they would be taking on a community and not just one person. The refugee camp did not have any electricity or any of the gadgets like phones and televisions that Lavanya and her people have now yet she says they found happiness through each other and had some degree of comfort knowing that there were people who would come to their rescue if they were in danger.

Drishya's earliest memory of the refugee camp where he was born was that of being in a prison. All he remembers was being confined in a relatively small place with throngs of people. Not only was their space small but it also had a boundary which no one from the camp could leave without facing dire consequences. Drishya felt that living in the camp was a waste of his intellect and creative ability. He recalls feeling destined for much higher goals than those that were available to him while living in the camp. In cultures like the Bhutanese which are collectivistic the younger people look to the adults for guidance and inspiration on what to do with their lives and which career paths to choose. But Drishya remembers only feeling frustrated after talking to the elders from his community,

"It's hard to be motivated because you are constantly seeing these people who kinda feel that they have lost something, something big, so you always see this constant frustration in them. It's hard to be around those people [laughs] you know? Like people who are stuck in memories."

Somewhere in this quote is an acknowledgement that the elders in the community are justified in feeling sad and having 'stuck in a rut' thinking, and hence don't deserve to be blamed for feeling this way. But one can also glean Drishya's frustration. One reason the adults remained in this state is because they lost all their assets and livelihood when they were evicted from Bhutan and not having any citizenship status meant that they could not resume their professions in Nepal and hence ended up feeling 'stuck'. Since Drishya had never visited Bhutan and did not report any attachment to that country he could not fully grasp the experience of his elders. All he perceived were a group of adults with potential but who had lost their motivation along the way and as a result they were sucking out all his motivation to excel and thus he began feeling like a victim of his circumstances.

Drishya also recalls the camp as teeming with people and this coming with issues of its own,

"Ummm but life there was not very peaceful, it gets pretty rowdy at times, you know when you have so many people confined in that amount of space there were a lot of struggles and people were like fighting and that sort of stuff and at the same time you can see lots of frustrations around you."

Being confined in a UNHCR administered camp where people had no way of exploiting their abilities and expending their energy created a host of people with close to nothing to do but engage in ruffling their environment. It was not the sheer size of the crowd that he had to live with that bothered him, but it was the fact that they were all stuck in one place with no work, which could result in their undoing, that worried him the most.

But Drishya also recounts finding his strength and solace in times of need among the swarm of people in the refugee camp. He admits that all these people together created havoc at times but these people were also the ones who reached out to one another in times of trouble and were the ones with whom memories were made. A

hallmark for Drishya about his community was their acceptance of one another and their unspoken understanding of each other's circumstances. As he recalls,

"You may be hungry and starving but the other guy who is standing there is hungry and starving too and you are just going through the same shit everyday together, I miss that bond."

Drishya laments that this is one thing about his life in the camp that he has never been able to replicate – this unspoken understanding. On retrospection he recounts that living in the camp was one of the best things that happened to him because only through that phase of his life does he appreciate the feeling of happiness. Drishya's experience of life in the refugee camp is characterized by his sense of connection with his community and particularly the time spent with his friends. He attributes being able to deal with all the injustice and hardships of living in the camp to his solid relationships with the people in his community. He recalls not caring too much about being 'chased out' of his own country but was really crestfallen that leaving also meant the loss of many of his friendships. Apart from the unspoken understanding among, them Drishya recounts that it was the fact that these mutual feelings of community seemed to come naturally to everyone that gave value to those relationships. Drishya finds it very hard to develop and maintain those kinds of deep relationships in his life at present –

"You know it is really hard to feel connected with people, but when I was back in the camp it was just like my friends and me we just got together and we just did like everything together and you always felt like you had someone no matter what."

For Riyaz the experience of living in the refugee camp was characterized by a pervading sense of always 'not having enough'. Being born into the refugee camp Riyaz had never grasped the real reasons why his parents and grandparents had fled Bhutan and why the world he was being made to live in always seemed to be in a state of 'want'. Riyaz's earliest memories were of playing football with his friends with balls made of paper, he recalls at this time that even though he enjoyed the game with his friends, the burning question at the back of his mind was *"why don't we have the right gears?"* Growing up, Riyaz found this pattern occurring in all aspects of his life. The pictures of houses and school buildings in his school books were 'awesome' buildings yet he and his family only had a hut as a roof over their heads. The schools in the books had

neat and tidy classrooms and a smart teacher but all they had to settle for were makeshift structures with no seating furniture and teachers who he realises in hindsight were not at all qualified to teach but who were 'trying their best' to better the knowledge of the camp children.

Wherever he looked all he could see was a paucity of resources and a society that needed so much yet got so little. As he remembers,

"Yeah not having like enough food to eat and not having like… Proper clothes… And in like difficult conditions and difficult like. It was really difficult"

Riyaz recalls that the daily task of his people was to find a way to get through and make their lives better with the few resources they had. As highlighted above, when they didn't have proper footballs they made them out of paper, when food supply was less in a household other families pulled in their supplies so that everyone could try and have a decent meal. Riyaz also remembers how neighbours and friends came to your rescue in the camp so there was always a little security in knowing that someone would be there for you. He recalled one incident in particular, -

"There was a big fire once, I guess it was caused by someone deep frying something. And one of my friend was caught in that and me and all my other friends along with the whole village like we just rushed to help them and put out the fire and clean the damage. Yeah… I guess that's how we made it better."

Madhuri describes life in the refugee camp as a lot of fun. Somewhere in her story there is an acknowledgement that her people were poor and did not possess any material wealth or afford any extravagancies in their house, she also recalls that they (particularly the women) had to do a lot of hard work and sometimes even risk their lives by spending an entire day in a forest gathering wood and edible vegetation. But when recalling her prominent memories she talks about how her people made all their activities fun and found something to laugh about even during their hardest moments. Madhuri recounts her experience of going into the forest as –

"Sometimes it was really hard like when we used to going to forest. It's really like a kind of dangerous, everything there like snake and tiger like that things. Even the people [local Nepalese] are bad. Like you know sometimes they will just (makes a motion to demonstrate slitting of the throat). But we would go there and just like having fun. talking to friends like in forest, sing a song and just yelling each other, which was really good [smiles]"

At the core of Madhuri's experiences in the refugee camp are the socializing and merriment that accompanied religious festivities of the Bhutanese community. Madhuri recalls how their festivities went on for days together and very often into the late hours of the night. For her these festivities were an occasion not only to celebrate her spiritual beliefs but for her to spend time bonding over shared meals with her community. The time when they celebrated was also the brief phases where they could 'let their guard down' and forget about their hardships and the struggles that the next day would bring them. Madhuri recalls counting the days to each festivity and waiting with anticipation till the day arrived. She also recalls that these festivities were a good opportunity for the community elders to forget their burdens for a while and just have some fun. As she illustrated with one instance –

"…. after this ceremony we also sing a song at night time, a lot of people come and dance, no one sleeps at that time. They are all singing and dancing and every house has lights. They just come and they have like a youngest to the oldest and they just get into a circle and dance with each other. The old people are really funny in this, they just wear some masks and they just dance and sing which is really cool because they don't get much chance to just act stupid and have fun things…."

Another source of happiness and support for Madhuri were her close friends. Since the camp in which they lived was very small with all the structures quite close to each other, it meant that all of her close friends' homes were very close to hers and so she had the good luck to spend a lot of time with them even late at night – something she knows may not have happened so easily had their circumstances been different especially considering that she was a young girl. For Madhuri, her friends were her source of entertainment, support and her much needed distraction, as is demonstrated in her words below, -

"I was really happy in Nepal because I had lots of friends. At night time we used to go to one friend's house and we would just buy some nuts like supari things and we would be just having fun and we would just hang around because our friends were really cool. We would usually share our feelings with each other and I think it was good that I got to share my feelings with my friends. We would never ever hurt each other because when they need me I'm always there."

Lucy's recollection of life in the refugee camp in Nepal was that of living in an ill-equipped environment. All those who wanted better facilities or better food or even better education had to spend their own money. But not many people in the camp had suitable employment nor did the rations from the UNHCR last anyone beyond feeding their families and buying the most basic of clothing. These circumstances led to no left over money and thus Lucy recalls people had to just deny themselves of better facilities and instead settle for whatever was handed to them by the UNHCR and whatever else they managed to save.

"If we want like something we really want, somethings are really expensive and we can't get that because we need money. Yeah that was the problem. You know we have to go to campus and college and we need money for that, some people go but some don't because some people are poor and they can't afford it. Yeah that's the hardest thing."

Another memory that Lucy recalled while talking about her life in Nepal was how she and her people were bullied and made to feel unwelcome by the local Nepali people – who just wanted all the refugees to go back to Bhutan. Lucy recalls how she and her friends were not always content being confined within the boundaries of the refugee camp and sometimes would sneak out without their parent's knowledge and go exploring mainland Nepal. Lucy recalls how she and her friends got discovered once by the Nepali people and they were abused verbally with derogatory terms and told to immediately return to their camp. Had they been adults Lucy is sure they all would have been arrested and locked up in a Nepali police station.

Lucy recalled many instances from her life in the refugee camp where she felt that they were being bullied and victimised by the Nepali locals. Like most of the other children in the refugee camp, Lucy was born there, and apart from knowing that her

parents were from Bhutan she had no link with Bhutan or the Bhutanese people and always identified as a Nepali. Lucy had not witnessed the 'ethnic cleansing' that had taken place in Bhutan nor had she witnessed or heard much about the agitations that took place in Nepal when the UNHCR set up the refugee camps for the evicted Bhutanese nationals. So Lucy could never understand why the locals were dictating so many aspects of her community's life. Lucy remembers that her people had to go into the forest to collect wood and other necessities but she was always asked to stay behind because going into the forest was 'not safe'. Lucy at one point believed that the thing that everyone was scared of in the forest were the tigers and snakes but later she came to realise that it was the locals that her people feared more than any animal. She recalled at that time she knew she had to be afraid of the locals but she never understood why.

But one memory of the refugee camp that brings a smile to Lucy's face is the close relationship her people shared with each other. As she says, "Even though we were poor we were really happy all the people were together and that's why. In Nepal we don't even need any permission to go to our neighbours' houses and stuff yeah because we are really close. We just enter our neighbour's houses and are like *"Hey what are you doing? What did you cook?"* This statement demonstrates the level of comfort that the Bhutanese refugees had with each other and Lucy commented that she is sad because she feels that she has not been able to find such solid relationships with other people anywhere else. The relationship she shared with her community is what made facing her difficulties in the refugee camp seem less daunting.

Only Lisa's narrative goes against the tide of suffering, fighting for resources and questioning her existence. Lisa's narrative reflects the life of a young child whose family has shouldered the struggles and let the children enjoy their freedom. When Lisa was asked to describe her life in the refugee camp she replied, "I don't remember everything but I still remember my friends as I had lots of fun with them." And right through Lisa's narrative all she remembered about her life in Nepal was her time with her friends and the mischief they made. Lisa pointed out that she didn't have anything to worry about because the UNHCR was supplying her family with food items, her brothers were earning for the family and her mother and older sisters saw to the preparation of the meals. Lisa recalled only two challenges she faced while living in

the camp – running away from school and going on outings with her friends and avoiding being seen by any of her family members or neighbours.

Lisa described some experiences where she went to Nepali picture houses with her friends to watch local movies. These outings were thrilling for the young refugees because it meant they could leave the confines of the camp and go exploring mainland Nepal. Sometimes she also went swimming in the rivers which were located in the forest far away from her home. This experience meant a lot to Lisa because she knew that she would never be sent so far away from her house so going meant that she got to indulge in a bit of freedom and truancy at the same time. Lisa remembers washing off any dirt or sand that stuck to her body before entering her house so that no one would know where she had been and in the odd case where someone known saw her and reported it to her mother, Lisa says that she took pleasure in simply denying that it was her that they saw.

Lavanya's question about why is life treating us like this conjures up the feeling that most of the participants reported, particularly when they were bullied by the locals, and were denied even the most basic resources for survival. One phenomenon that can be witnessed across most of the participants' accounts of their lives in the refugee camp is a lack of understanding over why the locals were always bullying and abusing them. All the participants had been born and raised in Nepal and hence had not witnessed their parents' displacement and subsequent flight from Bhutan, all they knew about that part of their heritage was what their parents had told them, and clearly why the Nepali locals disliked them and wanted them gone was not part of that story. Riyaz's comment of never having enough of anything also captures another phenomenon of the participant's narratives – of struggling with poverty. Along with being poor and not having sufficient resources some even reported having to fight to avoid starvation and others loathed being too dependent on government agencies to supply them their rations (which again were very often 'not enough').

And on the other hand the participants' major way of coping with hard times in the refugee camp can also be witnessed – the shared connection with the community. The relationship that the Bhutanese refugees shared with one another goes beyond just coming to each other's rescue in times of trouble, their relationship is characterized by

a transcendental connection that grew out of their shared experiences. This is also one reason why some participants described this relationship as having an unspoken understanding and no judgment for each other's circumstances. Another aspect of this sense of community among the Bhutanese refugees is their acknowledgement that their struggles are a 'collectivistic struggle' and anything that is to befall them would befall them as a community rather than hit them individually. And there is also the acknowledgement among some of the participants that these relationships are hard to replicate in their current lives, as Drishya recounts, there was something about being poor and being stranded in the same place that gave them a deep sense of connection.

Part Two - Leaving the Refugee camp forever

'Will the circle be unbroken?'

When Saki was asked to talk about her resettlement to New Zealand, tears welled up in her eyes and she got choked with emotion, after taking a few minutes to settle down and find her voice she replied with only three words – *"I didn't know"*. Saki is the youngest in her household and she was about 10 years old when her family decided to resettle. She remembers the day she left the camp as if it were yesterday. She recalls waking up early and leaving for school just like any other day but sometime around mid-day a taxi driver came to the school and informed her teachers that he had to take Saki to her parents. Saki was instructed to accompany the driver who on the way to the taxi told her that he was taking her to her parents and brothers who were waiting to leave for the airport. Saki was shocked but hesitantly asked the driver if he knew where her parents were going and that is when he told her that they were getting ready to leave Nepal.

Saki recalls being totally overcome with shock, confusion and disbelief. She did not remember anyone telling her that they would be moving nor did she remember being asked if she actually wanted to leave Nepal. She just stood there in shock as the driver her parents sent to collect her from school told her that her parents were waiting at an agency and that they had shut the house and packed everything for her. Saki then

remembers being ushered into the taxi and when she looked out from the window she realized for the first time that all her class mates and other school friends had followed her to the taxi. She recalls seeing their faces streaked with tears as they had been told that Saki is leaving forever. It was at this time that Saki let her own tears fall and cried watching her friends fade into the distance as the taxi drove away from the school. Saki still gets overwhelmed with emotion while talking about these incidents years later. She recounted that experience of her exchanging teary eyed looks with her school mates and friends was the only form of goodbye they had as she never saw most of them again.

Saki's narrative illustrates a complete loss of control over her life events and this loss was completely influenced by her parents and older brothers. In hindsight, she said that she was perfectly happy in Nepal and never felt the need to leave the place where she had been born. The decision to resettle was taken entirely by her older brother and parents and her being the youngest member of the family was completely left out of the decision making and planning. Saki's parent's decision also illustrates the way of the Nepali people to be very authoritarian with their children and to believe that the best thing to do for the children is to not tell them anything. Saki did not have a chance to see her home one last time, to bid farewell to her neighbours and friends or to pack any precious belongings including a gift box that had belonged to her one of her grandfathers (which she later found out that her mother threw away). The only goodbye Saki had was with her grandparents who had come to see them off at the airport. She did not want to leave her grandparents but in the end as with everything that was happening she had no choice. Her last memory of Nepal was watching her grandparents wave out to her from the aircraft window.

For Lucy's family the journey of resettlement began with a mounting distrust in the agencies who were promising it. Lucy recalls that it was about 2006 when they first heard that the Bhutanese refugees were being rescued from the camp and being sent overseas but in the light of all the promises that were made to them in the past and not honoured, this promise of being rescued was not taken seriously. It was only after the first group was taken by the agency and successfully resettled overseas that this promise

began to be taken seriously. But at this point rather than getting themselves ready to be resettled Lucy and her family started finding reasons why they should not go:

"We just thought that we shouldn't go and we should just stay here because we were born here and I like. We didn't really know about the overseas because the language was different and maybe it would be hard for us that's why people think that it's better to stay there"

This illustrates how some people sometimes have the tendency to cling on to their existing lifestyles no matter how much pain and discomfort it is causing them. Lucy's people were also very resistant to venture into the unknown and possibly change their circumstances but rather preferred staying in the refugee camp and fighting for survival. Lucy said that it was only when a resettled relative got in contact with them and told them that life overseas was actually better than their lives in Nepal and that the children would have a better future, did her parents decide that it was time to apply for resettlement,

"So my uncle and his family they came in 2008 and they used to call us and they used to say that it's really nice to come here and it's far better than Nepal, you should come and they used to tell us about New Zealand and that's why we changed our mind. And we thought that we should come here and live here."

And so began the resettlement process for Lucy and her family but even though they were going to get a better life at the end of it, the road to resettlement for Lucy was paved with tears. The last few days in the refugee camp were a blur of emotions for Lucy,

"I was like quite sad because I have to leave my friends actually I cried a lot when I come here because I had to leave my sister, my own sister is there and we were there that time but I think the most reason is like friends, we don't want to leave our friends. I thought like that time I should like spend most of the time with my friends because I won't ever be able to see them ever again. It was happening quite fast, happiness as well because you know I get to go to NZ and I can meet my family."

In hindsight Lucy says that there was no real time to feel anything, there were just too many things to do and too many people to meet with before they left the camp forever. But in the midst of all the packing and cleaning Lucy recalls looking for and

packing a scarf that belonged to her late grandmother, she said that was something more precious than gold for her and which she still treasures to date.

Adam was among the younger siblings in his household so did not have any say or any decision in his or his family's resettlement decision or their application. Adam's older brother was one among a daring group of Bhutanese refugees who had left the camp under cover and was working a full time job in mainland Nepal, so it was he who had done all the groundwork for the family's resettlement and had saved up the money that was required for the journey. Being young at that time Adam did not have any issue with not being involved in the process as he trusted his brother to lead them to the right place.

Adam's main recollection of the resettlement process is him having to leave all his friends and neighbours behind and he recalls that most of his family members felt the same way. Adam was born in the refugee camp and the friends he had were the only ones he had known his entire life. The prospect of going to a new country was a bit exciting for Adam but he also acknowledged that this was not going to be a one day outing – it would be a permanent move and most of the people he knew all his life may not be going with him. Adam describes his feelings during that phase of his life as –

"It was like pretty bad you know because we had to leave the neighbours and especially my friends and relatives. They [his family] felt like, they don't want go because they lived in Nepal for many years. At that time I didn't want to leave Nepal, I wanted to stay there because I miss a lot of my friends and family, I really didn't feel like going when the date came up because it was the end for us [referring to his friends]."

But Adam also recalled that ultimately it was his friends who made leaving Nepal easy for him –

"I had to think about it and I talked to my friends about it you know? And they said like it's good because you can get new stuff and they encouraged me and told that I would be able to get a good education and go for my further studies and yeah…. "

When Madhuri began recounting the journey of her family's resettlement to New Zealand she became very sad and started by saying,

"When I had to come to New Zealand I felt really bad because I don't know about New Zealand and like what would we have to do there"

This sadness and apprehension can be attributed to the fact that going to live in a new country meant that she had to be completely plucked out of her life in Nepal – which even though came with its dangers and hardships was the only life she had ever known. And along with her sense of desolation was the fear of leaving all her childhood friends behind and the fact that she and her family were among the first cohort of refugees to opt for resettlement.

Madhuri doesn't remember much of the paperwork and the processes that went behind making their resettlement applications because she was a minor at the time and hence her parents had to do the process on her behalf. Her recollections of the resettlement process are limited to a lengthy medical check and accompanying her parents for the resettlement interview (although she was not allowed to speak at this). Madhuri's strongest and fondest memory of the resettlement process is when all her family's friends and neighbours came to help them pack up all their belongings and secure their luggage. Madhuri recalls that her family and she did not have to do that much as everyone came and lent a hand, even Madhuri's mother had respite from her cooking responsibilities because neighbours were constantly seeing to it that they were fed. As she recalls -

"And when we were ready to come to New Zealand like friends and our neighbours just come there to help us like for packing our bag things and holding it and putting it on top like that. We were not cooking because our neighbours were calling like today you have to come for dinner to my place and people would call there also the people when we were ready to come they were just packing our things and just talking yeah it was really great"

Madhuri always knew that their community was their real backbone and this time proved to be no different for her. Her neighbours and friends were sad to see them go but were very supportive throughout the whole thing. Madhuri was desolate as well

as she knew that resettlement meant letting go of her much cherished community and at that point in time they were not sure if they would ever be allowed to return to Nepal to visit those who would not be resettling.

Drishya was a little older than the other participants when his family decided to resettle and through his school teachers and own research had found out a lot of the history between Bhutan and Nepal and how the two countries had conducted multiple unsuccessful negotiations on the status of the refugees. Thus when the agencies came to camp speaking of repatriation for the Bhutanese, Drishya reacted with distrust and scepticism. And the rumours and talks about the resettlement process went on for about three years before the refugees began successfully being taken out of the camp. That is when Drishya saw some hope in the process and decided to encourage his mother to apply to be resettled.

Since Drishya had already witnessed that people from his community were being successfully resettled he was not troubled over the process or that resettlement would not be granted to his family. Instead Drishya diverted his attention to his friends and creating memories with them since he knew their time together would soon be over and they may or may not go to the same country as him. He spent a lot of his time going on adventures that hitherto he either did not have time for or was not allowed to. The last few months in the camp for Drishya were among the happiest that he ever had in that place. As he describes –

"So the last months were just about creating memories and you know? Doing teenage stuff [laughs] you know there is a jungle very close to the camp and as a kid I didn't get to go to that jungle because my parents were pretty strict about it and I had these friends who would keep going to the jungle and I always wanted to do that, so I went to the jungle a lot like one month before I left Nepal, we went to the forest every day and we would swim and just hang out in the forest. Yeah, I did a lot of that, it was all that mattered in that place"

The above excerpt illustrates Drishya's priorities and also captures one part of his life that he holds dear – his friends. His knowledge and experience also played a role because he had researched how the resettlement process works and hence did not

stress over it. Owing to this security that his family would eventually be granted resettlement Drishya was able to focus his energies on things that mattered most to him.

Lavanya and her family were among the first cohort of Bhutanese refugees that were successfully resettled from the camps in Nepal. When the news of resettlement was circulated in the camp it was met with apprehension and distrust. There had already been too many unfulfilled promises from the government and other international agencies along with a host of unsuccessful negotiations among the countries involved with the plight of the Bhutanese refugees so it was only a natural reaction from the refugees to not trust any news about resettlement. In addition to the generalised distrust of governmental policies Lavanya recalls that there were additional rumours that those who opted for resettlement would be taken out from the refugee camp and would all be separated from their families, and children would be taken away from their parents. These rumours spread primarily because there was no one who could prove them wrong and there was no way for anyone from the camp to contact anyone who would be able to provide that information.

Lavanya recalls that her parents ultimately decided to take a risk and apply for resettlement. Their only reason for this was because Lavanya had a younger sister who had been diagnosed with a heart condition and there was no cure or treatment available for her in Nepal so the parents thought that if they risk applying for resettlement and in the unlikely event that they were sent to a better country then at least their children would have a chance for a better life particularly their daughter who had a heart condition. So ultimately Lavanya's younger sister was the reason why her parents decided to set aside their fear and apprehensions and apply to be resettled – being the first cohort they didn't even know where they would be sent and what would be their fate there.

Lavanya recalls that the days leading to them leaving the camp were filled with fear and their neighbours crying and telling them not to leave. Lavanya wasn't too concerned about what was being packed and what had to be thrown away. All she recalls is not wanting to be separated from her mother, because in her mind she believed that somehow they would be separated soon. When she was asked what she remembers of her resettlement journey all she said was,

"It was very challenging because we didn't know what was going to happen. We weren't sure about anything so we were very nervous at the same time."

For Riyaz and his family the resettlement process was not wrought with great anxiety because an uncle of his mother (whom he refers to as grandfather) had resettled in New Zealand in one of the earlier cohorts, the grandfather and his family got in contact with Riyaz's family in Nepal and would narrate stories of a world that is not wrought with poverty and suffering and where people can live freely and the children have a chance of creating a better life. Listening to these stories from the grandfather gave Riyaz's family the nudge to apply for resettlement and pack up their lives in Nepal. Riyaz recalls that when their applications were approved they were presented the option of going to countries other than New Zealand but his family was sure that they wanted to go only to New Zealand because they already had relatives there.

Riyaz felt that moving out from the refugee camp was more difficult for his parents than for him, simply because they had spent more time there than he and also because their entire families were there and all of them could not resettle together. Riyaz also felt a tinge of sadness when he was packing up because he knew that he would not see some of his friends again. But in hindsight Riyaz recalled that their decision to resettle was an inevitable one because no matter how much they like living in Nepal, it could not be their home forever hence moving out was more of a compulsion –

"It was difficult but it had to be done for us to change our life. The main reason was umm yeah. We weren't living in good conditions or getting good educations. So yeah just to change our life. Yeah that was the main reason to come to New Zealand."

Riyaz recalled that the only way he could make leaving Nepal a little easier for himself was to pack a little of it within his luggage and this took the form of gifts from his family members and friends –

"ummmm yes I packed one sweater. It was from my Grandparents they sewed it themselves and I think yeah I still have it with me. And I got a necklace from my mates. Yeah I packed that one too"

Bringing these gifts safely to New Zealand was a challenge for Riyaz but it was an effort he was willing to make. It was worth the effort bringing these gifts because

they are more than memories, they are now fragments of the life he led in Nepal and are all that he has left to hold on to.

Lisa's whole life in Nepal revolved around her friends and her time spent with them and this was no different when it came to resettlement. She recalls not being worried or wanting to play a role in the resettlement process because she had an older brother who was a teacher and had done all the necessary research about resettlement and was just telling them what needed to be done. But leaving her friends was one of the biggest tragedies of her life. She recalled crying a lot during the last days leading up to her leaving the camp and even on the last day she went to a place away from her home to meet her friends for the last time -

"Like when I came here I felt really sad because I had to leave my friends, my relatives, my neighbours, everyone and my friends were not happy when I came. Before coming here I left school like one month before and my friends were so unhappy that they left too, they left school and they didn't go back. When I came here like the day we left there was a park and we went there and all my friends came from the other side and I was crying and they didn't want to see me that time because I was crying. Yeah a really sad moment"

Lisa packed a delicate photo album in her luggage in Nepal which contains photos of all her friends and the fun times they had. She carries it around with her most of the time and while talking about her friends and the things she brought with her from Nepal she instinctively reaches for the photo album and describes her friends with their pictures. This photo album is her only real tangible memory of her friends and the time she spent with them in Nepal.

One of the emotions that is captured across most participants' narratives is a profound sadness. This sadness does not have its roots in the fact that these young people had to leave Nepal but rather in the fact that they had to leave most if not all of their friends and neighbours behind and since resettlement was being granted for different countries. The participants also harboured a sadness at knowing that they may never get to see these friends again. This phenomenon of profound sadness may not

have occurred if all the friends were resettled in the same country. This is one of the hallmarks across all the participants' narratives and in the case of Saki, it is observed how much pain she experienced from not being given the chance to even bid farewell to her friends. And in the case of Lisa one can witness how friendships are at the core of her life routine in the camp. I chose to title this section as 'Will the circle be unbroken?' because at the time of writing it was my opinion that the participants' emotion of sadness at leaving loved ones behind was encapsulated in the words of this traditional Christian hymn which intones the human desire to be reunited with loved ones who have passed away. Even though no participant recounted the death of any friend, they knew that once they moved to New Zealand there were slim chances of them ever getting to see their friends from Nepal again. Some participants even expressed a desire to travel back to Nepal someday or even to other parts of the world only to be able see their old friends again.

Another experience of the Bhutanese youth that can be seen in their narratives is a lack of involvement in their resettlement process. Some participants also indicated not asking their parents why they had to move. This could be attributed primarily to the fact that all the participants were minors at the time that their families applied for resettlement and hence were not allowed to make their own applications or procure their own documents. In turn, along with their applications all the decisions and other arrangements of resettlement were made for them. Some participants expressed a discomfort or displeasure with their family's decision to leave the camp but this did not result in a very active resistance. Much as their displeasure can be witnessed, there is also an acknowledgement that they could not stay without their families hence all without exception accepted that they had to leave the camp.

Most participants can also be seen taking the time to pack some personal item of great sentimental value while leaving the camp for good. These personal belongings are what form the young people's tangible link to their old lives and in some cases these items were links to family members who had passed away in Nepal. There was not much that they possessed to bring with them so all their memories of Nepal are now contained within those personal objects. In the case of Saki it can be observed how not being able to bring a cherished possession along piled up more sadness on top of the first, and created an internal void. When Saki lost her grandfather's medicine chest she also lost the last tangible link with him since he passed away. It can also be noted how

much sadness is evoked by the mere memory of this chest and not being able to have it.

Distrust in government agencies can also be witnessed in some participants' accounts. The house of Bhutan and the Nepalese government had had multiple unsuccessful negotiations on the predicament of the refugees and hence when they heard about being offered resettlement they choose to believe that it was going to be yet another unsuccessful experiment on them. Belief only came to the youths and their families when they saw that their comrades were actually getting resettled overseas and when their resettled friends and families got in contact with them and told them that life in their new countries was much better than Nepal. It was only then that they actually saw some hope in the process being offered. Having relatives who took the first plunge by choosing to resettle made it an easier transition for some of the participant's families – Like Riyaz and Lucy. The participants who had relatives who came to New Zealand before them reported feeling less anxious about their resettlement process and journey. The stress of resettlement can be witnessed particularly strongly with participants like Lavanya and Madhuri who were among the first cohort of Bhutanese refugees to be resettled. Until this cohort actually arrived safely in their new host country they felt that their decision was a gamble with their life and the fact that very little information was being disseminated to them caused additional tension among them. Which is why these participants repeatedly said – "We just didn't know what was going to happen to us".

Part Three - The New (Zealand) Chapter

'What! Are we eating this???'

The participants' accounts of landing in New Zealand are multifarious. Some recall being in total awe of what they saw while some felt totally disappointed. And there were a few who thought that this 'new country' they were going to was going to be exactly like Nepal. Most participants did not even know what New Zealand would look like and what they might find there so they allowed their imaginations to decide. However when it came to describing their first few weeks in New Zealand most

participants recall feelings of loneliness, frustration at all the things that they had to get accustomed to and a constant engagement with the unknown. The participants' recollections of their first few weeks have been presented in the section below.

The journey to New Zealand for Saki was a blur. The first thing she recalls seeing are an abundance of green trees from the aircraft window, at this moment she recalls a small spark of hope because the sight of trees reminded her of the hills and forests in Nepal, so she had a flicker of hope that somehow her family had taken her back to Nepal – but this hope was soon squelched. Saki did not speak much with her family members during the journey. This illustrates the continuation of her shock over having been plucked out of her country. Saki's aloofness from her family became more pronounced as they came closer to New Zealand as the amount of people speaking foreign languages (especially English) increased and neither Saki nor her parents could speak any English. Seeing her parents so handicapped on account of the language Saki lost confidence in their ability to protect her if she needed it. She does recall feeling a bit sorry for them since they were as lost as she was but at that time her anger towards them overshadowed the need to try and help them.

To add to this Saki was displeased that it was her brother was making all the decisions for the family since he was the one who had done most of the research and was the one who could speak English. This caused Saki a bit of resentment towards her brother as she had until that moment believed that it was just her parents who had planned their departure from Nepal. Saki at this stage ignored her family and began listening instead to the rumours about their resettlement that were being circulated among the cohort they were travelling with.

Saki spent the first couple of weeks of her life in New Zealand at the Mangere centre. The first issue that she remembers facing was, having to learn English. Saki wasn't that interested in talking to anyone at that stage so didn't see the point in learning English. But at the same time she recalls being very nervous about what people were talking around her if she couldn't understand what they were saying, "It was just like I didn't have any idea what they were talking about. And I thought that they were talking something bad about me. Just like 'what are they saying? Are they talking about me? Or are they talking about someone else or is it something else?' it was just a lot of questions in your mind." Saki then focussed on learning English and she recalls being

so dedicated to it that she didn't mind just talking to random people and making embarrassing mistakes. When Saki and her family were allotted to live in Christchurch she recalls having to spend about 15 days in a motel until they got a house. At the motel she encouraged herself to talk in English to some other children who were living near her and befriend them.

But despite all the other factors Saki says that her biggest struggle was, "It was different but I still can't forget Nepal because my parents never told me." She took a long time to recover from her forced departure from Nepal and still held a great amount of sadness over not being able to bid her friends farewell properly. Saki was also unable to forget about the gift box that belonged to her grandfather because that was the only relic she had of him. When asked how she coped with this she attributed it to her strong personality and her dedication towards learning English and making friends in Christchurch, "I guess I'm a strong person and I guess that I made new friends here and I started communicating with them and I started talking to them about my friends in Nepal which was how I coped." More than anything else Saki describes herself as having tremendous inner strength and knows that she can rely on herself in times of trouble.

Lucy said that her journey to New Zealand began with her being confronted by an airplane for the first time in her life,

"You know to be honest I've never seen like airplane in my real life, of course I have seen them in the sky but not in real life like face to face, I was really scared for the first time so when I get in the plane for the first time, I was really really really, scared [laughs nervously]"

These lines illustrate Lucy's apprehension at confronting something that was larger than her for the first time. Being told to get on the plane and realizing that there is no other way out of Nepal made Lucy wonder what exactly she had gotten herself into. Upon arriving in Auckland and being taken to Mangere centre Lucy recalls that she was quite disappointed with what she saw. In her childish mind she expected to see a place that was exactly like Nepal – with makeshift structures and the place teeming with people. As she recounts -

"You know I didn't see any people on the roads and stuff it was really quiet and I was quite disappointed because I used to see lots of people in Nepal, lots of crowd and in NZ we didn't get to see people much, yeah I was quite disappointed by that time because THERE WAS NO PEOPLE [gesticulates and then laughs] and I was like where is everybody???"

This line illustrates how poorly informed the Bhutanese refugees that arrived in New Zealand were. They were told that they were coming to a better life but they didn't know what to expect or what they were actually getting into. Even with Lucy's previous account of the airplane there can be gleaned an element of not knowing what to expect from their decisions. Another problem which Lucy and her family faced in their first few weeks in New Zealand was the change in food. Lucy describes the first meal in Auckland –

"Ummm the biggest problem was like food [giggles] we had like other rooms like we had our own rooms but we had to go to kitchen and when I entered the kitchen like door, the smell is so bad [giggles again] it was like I couldn't eat anything because of the smell that was so bad, I can remember that. Not only me, actually like everybody. Because the people here eat their food raw [referring to salads] but we like our food cooked. I didn't eat like for or five days and then I got used to it and then I started eating."

This issue is another illustration of how the Bhutanese did not know what to expect after coming to New Zealand. They may have been living in conditions of poverty back in Nepal but they still were able to cook and eat their own meals according to their taste. But their first experience of food in the country that was supposed to be their new home and their chance at better futures was a complete turn off. This resulted in people like Lucy not eating properly for a couple of days but in the end they had to give in because it was either eat what they had or starve to death. The only respite that Lucy got from the food was on the weekends when a local Hindu religious group would come and take them to the temple and feed them home-cooked Indian food. Lucy recalls eagerly waiting for these weekend trips to the temple.

But for Lucy even the frightening journey to New Zealand and the turn off over the food faded into the background when she found her friends at the Mangere centre. Lucy recounts that she did have some problems adjusting to her new life and getting

used to the country but there was nothing that could bring her down for a long time as long as her friends were there with her,

"In Auckland I had like six or seven friends who had come with me so I had no worries and some who are like my best friends and some of my friends from Nepal are still here so I got friends so no worries [smiles]"

When Madhuri recounted the day they left Nepal she exuded a sense of bewilderment. She remembers that after their plane left the Kathmandu (capital of Nepal) airport they were taken to Hong Kong en route to New Zealand. Madhuri remembers feeling quite overwhelmed after seeing all the tall buildings of Hong Kong because she had never seen such structures in her life. She also recalls having a terrible time with the food. She describes her first experience with food outside the refugee camp as follows –

"Just looking and the food there made me nervous because we usually eat our own natural food and after that when I came to Hong Kong it was like all Chinese food I think. I don't know and they had some Bhajji [cooked vegetables] which was something they put like curry which is called. Umm. can't remember like a there's [trying to find the right words] Because we usually cook really good but there's was just like only veggie's which I think was really healthy but because it was first time we din like it (laughs) but yeah I did not drink or eat anything at that time cause actually I really miss my friends"

Even years later talking about that experience in Hong Kong brings back the confusion that Madhuri felt back then. Madhuri's experience illustrates the confusion of a young girl who has just left her 'home' forever. Madhuri acknowledges that she could not eat the food that she saw in Hong Kong but it was not purely because she perceived it as an inedible concoction of ingredients, it was also because she was still full of sadness and was missing her friends. Had they been with her they would have probably laughed at the quality of food and over a joke found a way to somehow eat it, but unfortunately for her that was not the case.

Adjusting to the food took Madhuri weeks and persisted even after she arrived in Auckland and started staying at the Mangere centre. Madhuri recalls that it was mostly the smell of the place that turned her off the food and on most days she would just tell her mother that she wasn't in a mood to eat and just sleep. She recounts that she started missing the Nepali food so much that she preferred starving herself then eating any foreign made food.

"We did have a big food problem in Mangere because they were cooking the Kiwi food and we wanted only Nepali food. We felt really bad there and even the smell was really bad. Probably they put some medicine there in the kitchen the smell was very bad and we always had to hold our mouth and nose (makes actions to demonstrate) when we went to the kitchen they always gave us some bread, some pasta like things but I never ever eat it (laughs) I was always thinking Oh my God! How can I eat it? I usually just drink water. Every day in the mornings they would give us like breakfast but I never wanted to go there. And I would always tell my mom that I don't want to go there for breakfast because I just don't like there"

Until she adjusted to the food and brought herself to eat it her only respite was when she was taken to the temple of the Hindus in Auckland. One respite was that the religious hosts who took them always gave them home cooked Hindu meals and they were allowed to eat till they had their fill. The second respite for Madhuri was the religious service that usually followed the meals. Following religious customs socially was a huge part of Madhuri's life in Nepal and by joining in the service with their hosts in the temple gave Madhuri a sense of belonging as well as the opportunity to indulge in one of her much needed devotions.

Shortly thereafter Madhuri remembers that they were informed that they had been allotted to live in Christchurch. Her family was relieved to hear this because they had some relatives who were already living in Christchurch. While in Mangere, they had a fixed schedule to follow, lessons to go to and a great deal of immigration procedures to contend with. But after coming to Christchurch everything just seemed to come to a standstill. Madhuri and her family did not know what they were supposed to do nor did any volunteer or agent come in to advise them on what to do next. She described her first few days in Christchurch as –

"Volunteers dropped us to our house and I was like 'Alone' I have to live here alone and I felt really alone. I didn't do much at that time because I was really nervous. It was like something was missing our house was as if someone had died. You know like missing something but don't know what we're missing."

Madhuri's above description illustrates some of the Bhutanese community's unmet expectations. While still in Nepal they were promised better lives and secure futures yet at this point Madhuri was unsure what all their effort and sacrifices had amounted to. There was no indication as to how they were going to be lead to better lives or who would come to help them do it, to Madhuri it felt as if all they could do was wait for something to happen.

When things gradually began working out and Madhuri was enrolled in school she faced her next big issue – not being able to speak English. Madhuri was not much bothered by it until the time came for her to interact with her teachers. Madhuri recalled that in Nepal one must always be respectful of the teachers and this includes not asking them to repeat what they have said as this is perceived as hassling behaviour. Such being the case Madhuri found it very hard to follow her teacher's instructions because every time they spoke to her she would nod in affirmation and if she was specifically asked if she had understood what was being taught she would say yes as she believed it to be disrespectful to say otherwise to a teacher. Madhuri's experience also illustrates how sometimes people with refugee backgrounds are just thrust into mainstream education without being fully prepared or aware of what is expected of them.

Fortunately for Madhuri her class was made up of immigrant and former refugee students who like her, did not speak English very well and so they also started helping each other try and understand what was being taught. Very soon Madhuri found herself becoming close friends with the people in her class and they used to spend a lot of time together either playing games or playing pranks on other new students. Without her new friends Madhuri admits that she would probably have found school boring and not found the motivation to keep at it. Her new friends also gave her new memories and gave meaning to her new life in Christchurch. Madhuri also recalls that for the first time in her life she was able to meet people who were from other countries and she found this opportunity very exciting. Spending time with her new friends also made her less despondent over the friends whom she had to leave behind in Nepal.

Madhuri says that it was her pride in her new achievements that give her added motivation to continue building a life in New Zealand. She acknowledges that coming to New Zealand gave her the chance to experience so many things which were definitely not available to her in Nepal like driving, meeting people of other nationalities, learning English and getting a higher level of education. But she also acknowledges that even these small accomplishments have not come easy and especially in the initial weeks she had to struggle with loneliness and just wanted to go back to Nepal –

"First it used to be hard for me because I don't understand anything before and then when were taken to the camp [Mangere] just like feeling alone and I don't want to go there and I just wanted to stay with my friends and I usually miss my Nepal friends. But now I was thinking if I get good English then I can make many friends. And then I thought that this is really great to help us make friends and if we got good English then there was nothing to worry about it."

Madhuri's biggest motivations are her friends and she acknowledges that she was only able to make so many friends because she learned to speak English.

Drishya's first emotion on arriving in New Zealand was disappointment. From all that he had researched he knew that New Zealand was a developed country so he was expecting to find the place bursting with traffic and towering with skyscrapers. And to add to his expectations was his stop over at Hong Kong and when he saw the buildings and heard the noise of Hong Kong city he thought New Zealand would be the same as that. Drishya recalls being grossly disappointed when he got out of the airport in Auckland because the city did not create an impression of being 'developed'. But at the same time Drishya remembers not dwelling excessively on his disappointment because he was also amazed at some of the aspects of New Zealand which he had not expected –

"It was like Bizarre! There were all these hangers and these clothes that I had never seen before, not even in pictures. The NZ that I had imagined was totally different. Pretty much the clothes and the shapes of the houses looked so different to the ones in Nepal and what we expected and that kind of stuff."

Once Drishya and his cohort arrived at the Mangere centre there was another thing that created a sense of wonder for him – seeing and interacting with people from so many different countries. Seeing a person of a different skin colour in Nepal was a rarity for those who lived within the confines of the camp so it was complete amazement for Drishya at being able to meet people from so many different parts of the world.

Drishya described his life at that stage as an adaptation process. They were confronted with so many changes that all they could do was assimilate what was happening and find a way through it. Drishya does not recount this episode as particularly stressful or difficult but he does acknowledge that there were things that needed some getting used to – especially the New Zealand food. He described finding the food hard to adapt to because he is very choosy over what he eats –

"With me it was pretty difficult because I am quite picky with food. I mean like here all the food is sweet and back in Nepal we were used to eating salty stuff but once you get here it's all sweet and then the green stuff and you're just not used to eat so you don't like it. Oh yeah it was very challenging, we were struggling with eating food every day"

When asked how he dealt with all the challenges during this phase of his life Drishya said, "The best way I deal with anything is by not talking about it" Drishya feels that talking about something that is bothering you is an encouragement to give too much attention to it. He prefers holding his troubles close to his chest and just trying to work them out and find a way through it. This is a quality that Drishya developed in the refugee camp. Living in the camp one had to acknowledge that life was hard and given the social and political circumstances around it, it probably wasn't going to get any better. So rather than constantly whining, it was more fruitful to just find a way around the situation. Borrowing from these experiences Drishya also revealed that another way he tries to deal with stressful situations is by confronting them head on and then getting over it as soon as possible.

"I just try to get over it as quickly as I can and move into the next step, because the more you keep yourself in that state of worry the less you accomplish, so unless it's something really really big you know like a massive problem, I try to get over it very quickly. Yeah basically and just try and not think about it. I mean why talk about it and make me feel really really bad about it and just ruin my day?"

Lavanya's first recollection of New Zealand was the Mangere centre where they had to spend the first few weeks. Since there was no information given to them on what was happening or where they were being taken they all assumed that Mangere was their new home and Lavanya recalls how one lady in their cohort felt that the structures in the Mangere centre resembled a prison and burst out crying and with that everyone began to panic. This illustrates how the Bhutanese refugees had their fears which stemmed mostly from them constantly dealing with the unknown and not knowing what to expect out of the resettlement process. Lavanya describes this process as – "I

"It was very challenging because we didn't know what was going to happen, we weren't sure about anything so we were very nervous and scared all at the same time "

A big issue for Lavanya in her first few months in New Zealand was her inability to understand and speak English. She first faced this problem in the Mangere centre but soon found her way around it as life in Mangere followed a structure right from morning till night so she found a way to survive within those constraints. But it became a huge problem for her when her family was sent to live in Christchurch and she was sent to school. Being the first Bhutanese cohort to arrive in New Zealand there were not many children among them and Lavanya's siblings were too young to be enrolled in school so she had to go to school alone with no one to support or accompany her. In addition Lavanya says that she is by nature a very shy person and is not the type who would go and strike up a conversation with strangers thus she found it very difficult to make new friends. She would sometimes muster up the courage to at least say hello to people but on one occasion she recalls being on the playground alone and she heard some kids imitating funny accents and she was quite horrified because she thought that they were making fun of her and her broken English. This dimmed her self-confidence and only caused her to withdraw further into her shell and not socialise and at this point she also began terribly missing her home and her old friends. Lavanya still gets emotional while talking about her initial school experience –

"I went to school which was very challenging for me because everything was new like the school and the people around me and then the language which I couldn't even speak, and I was the type of person like very shy and I wouldn't talk much and

then I was not that confident and then like. I still had no friends and stuff. I used to miss home a lot. Because back home it used to be very crowded and I had lots of friends around and lots of people and now it just felt so empty and lonely and then yeah. [Breaks off] "

Lavanya recalled two major things that happened while she was in school that completely changed her experience of school. The first was that her best friend from Nepal got resettled in Christchurch in the second cohort of refugees from Nepal and this friend started going to the same school as her. The arrival of her friend reduced Lavanya's tension in school as she finally had someone to hang out with during the lunch breaks who could completely understand her. Lavanya also started being positive about her education when her friend and she started practicing their English together. Another major event for Lavanya which was a cynosure experience was when one of the teachers approached her and her friend and asked them to perform a Nepali dance at a school gathering. Lavanya recalls that this request from their teacher pulled them out of their cocoons and made them more active in their schools social events. After this event Lavanya and her friend also developed a relationship with the teachers in their school and this gave them to encouragement to excel in their studies as well as in extracurricular events. Lavanya recounts that suddenly, seemingly overnight going to school became a joyous event in her life.

When reflecting on her New Zealand journey Lavanya admits that it came with its own hardships and its fair share of adjustment issues, but in the end it was like 'waking up from a bad dream'. After all the horror she had witnessed in the refugee camp, life in New Zealand (even with all its challenges) turned out being a piece of cake for Lavanya. The biggest difference that Lavanya remembers between her life in Nepal and New Zealand was that in the former people used to get exhausted from dealing with the hardships of being a refugee and would end up giving up on life – with some even taking extreme measures like ending their lives. But in New Zealand people had a sense of hope – there was always something positive to begin the day with. It was this hopefulness and bright outlook towards the future that was kindled among her people that Lavanya found to be most inspiring. For the first time all her life events started to make sense to her and she felt that holding on to life even when things got unexplainably difficult in the camp seemed worth it.

Riyaz recalls being completely filled with awe and a sense of wonder when he first arrived in Auckland. The city was appealing to look at and he recalls seeing beauty and development wherever he looked. At this stage he had his confirmation that everything that his grandfather had told them about New Zealand was true.

"The first time I landed in Auckland. I mean it was all green. Outside I looked it was all green. Like WOW! So green yeah. It was like peaceful and I saw like buildings and all the technology and stuff and I thought wow this is interesting"

When his family and he were taken to the Mangere centre they were relieved to meet other people from their camp who had just arrived a few days before them. But after a few days when their 'settling in' started to take place Riyaz recalls that he started feeling a little anxious. Riyaz is the eldest son in his family and he felt a sense of responsibility towards his parents especially since they could not speak or understand English and hence were dependent on him to make their decisions. Riyaz also recalled feeling very anxious over the lack of information on their status.

"In Mangere we were with other Nepalese people too. So it was good interacting with them. But outside of that it was all new. Yeah it was hard to know all the stuff. Where are we going to live? Is any Nepalese going to live around us? Who is going to help with buying food? Yeah those kind of things. And I really didn't know what I supposed to tell them [his family] they wanted information but I couldn't give it to them. Everything was new. It was difficult not knowing what to do with anything. So yeah it was difficult"

Lisa recalled that her plane ride to New Zealand was very unpleasant. The first reason for this was that this was her first time in an aircraft and wasn't used to sitting in a restrained position for so long. She recalls feeling as if she had been tied to the chair and not being allowed to move. The second reason she found her flight unpleasant was because this was the first time in her life that she had been separated from all her friends. She was quite sure that if she was with them they would have found a way to make the unpleasant journey at least a little fun –

"Like I had never been in an airplane and I was just staring at all the people in the airplane. I felt really something [makes an action to show gagging of the mouth] in

the airplane because we were tied and we cannot sing, dance or jump and there was really nothing to do. And I was really bored in the airplane because none of my friends were there. I had my family of course but I mostly share my feelings with friends and if they were there we could have had some fun."

This point illustrates that at the crux of Lisa's life was her relationship with her friends and how every experience she had had in life was shared with her friends. Leaving the camp and sitting in an aircraft were two major events in her life and for the first time she didn't have a single friend to share those experiences with. It would seem logical then that Lisa would experience a sense of grief at this time but instead she experienced a sense of suffocation. While this can be partially attributed to the physical set up of an aircraft, this feeling could also probably be attributed to the fact that she had no one to express her feelings to. She explained that she always expressed everything to her friends and since in this situation she couldn't, the bottled up feelings were experienced as suffocation.

After arriving in Auckland the first thing she remembers is staring at everything because everything was a first time experience for her – the buildings, the colours and also the people. As she recalls –

"Yeah when I came to Auckland I feel nervous and excited because I never ever seen like white people back home [giggles]. I saw like tall buildings, tall people, different people and different styles of dressing and everything was so different from what we had before so that was really new for our eyes. I remember staying in the airport for some hours and I was looking at people like this [makes big eyes] because they were so different from us and they even speak different from us."

This example illustrates Lisa's sense of child-like wonder upon seeing new phenomenon for the first time. While Lisa's first memory is one of a sense of wonder her next memory was one that caused her much distress. Lisa remembers how everyone around them was speaking English but she found herself struggling to keep up with what people were speaking because her English knowledge was limited. Lisa also remembers feeling guilty because she also saw her parents struggling as they didn't know any English so could not even understand a bit of what was going on around them. She recalls at that time that she would have loved to be a support to her parents

because they were feeling lost but even her English skills were not sufficient for her to assist them.

Another issue that Lisa remembers having to deal with was the shock over the food they were served in the Mangere centre. Lisa recounts that she was so affected by it that at one point she really believed that she was being starved to death –

"Back home we used to eat like rice, curry and spicy food but when we came to Mangere they didn't have like that it was totally different. They were eating like salads and sausage, bread and all stuff that we never had back home and we were wondering like why don't they give us food??? For the first few days I used to cry and used to tell my mom that I don't want to eat like this."

Lisa recalled that she only got a respite from the food when a local religious group of people of Indian ethnicity came to visit them once a week. She remembers them taking all the interested refugees to their temple and serving them some authentic Indian food. Lisa recalls this being a huge respite because the food and the lifestyle of Indian people was very similar to the Nepalese and so they got a chance to eat some food that was suited to their palate and interact with people who had similar cultural and spiritual beliefs as they did.

After a month and a half Lisa and her family were sent to live in Christchurch. After arriving at their allocated home Lisa remembers her first experience of feeling lonely and homesick -

"It was really really cold and we didn't know anyone here. We just came to our room and we slept. I really didn't know what to do that time and actually I don't remember much from that time because that time was really stressful and I was really missing my friends and everything back home."

Lisa's experience probably resulted from the lack of information and guidance that they had to deal with at that time. They were dropped off to their house by Red Cross volunteers but no one came to check on them and find out how they were doing in the days that followed. And also no one came to inform them what the next course of action would be for them and how they were to go about getting it done. It was days before someone came to their house to guide them about English courses and how to get enrolled and then subsequently how to look for jobs. It was also weeks before Lisa

started making friends with the people in her new school. Once she made friends she recalls that her life changed and then she started enjoying life again. Being able to make new friends and be social was the key factor in adjusting to life in Christchurch for Lisa.

"I have lots of friends here now. And I have many more memories like we used to go to school and every month we used to go out. We used to go to the beach or on the tram, anywhere and that's where I met lots of friends and that time like when I was with these friends I used to not remember or miss my friends from back home [Nepal]. I used to just enjoy with my friends here and yeah then I was ok. It's all ok now"

Adam does not recall feeling any anxiety or stress while his family packed and left the camp or while they travelled. But he was hit by a wave of anxiety after arriving in New Zealand. Since he had not been involved in the process he had somehow developed the impression that they would be taken straight from the refugee camp to their new home in New Zealand so when he together with his family was taken to Mangere centre he thought that was going to be his new home. He was a bit alarmed after a few days when he found that they would be at Mangere centre for only a few days and then they would be taken to another city that would be their home. This is the point where realization hit Adam when he figured that he really didn't know much of that was going to happen to him and where he would be taken.

Along with this Adam found himself unable to eat the food being served in the Mangere. Adam's first reaction to it was, *"What! Are we eating this???? [Disgusted expression]"* Adam recalls that he found the content of the meals as well as the way in which it had been prepared very repulsive. He couldn't bring himself to eat the food for many days until he realised that this was the best they were going to get and he had to eat it if he didn't want to starve himself. Apart from the food Adam recalls also being put off by the weather. There are drastic differences in the temperature of Nepal and New Zealand with the latter being the colder place and Adam found that this was too much for him to handle.

And finally Adam recalls being very perplexed over his lack of English skills. He remembers feeling very guilty when he saw his parents struggling to make sense of things in Auckland because they did not speak or understand any English. Even with his limited knowledge of English Adam found it very stressful to communicate with

others and assist his parents because he just couldn't follow the New Zealand accent and neither could the New Zealand people understand him. All these factors combined contributed to his anxiety at that time hence Adam's recollections of his first few weeks in New Zealand were not very pleasant.

Travelling to New Zealand was a first experience of flying in an aircraft for all of the participants. Some participant's recollections paint a picture of what it was like entering the aircraft for the first time. There was a sense of complete bewilderment and fear because this vehicle was about to take them into the sky and none of them knew any details of what it was and how it works and most importantly how safe they were inside it. Lisa remembers feeling very suffocated after having to remain belted to a seat for a long time – the journey from Nepal to the transit in Honk Kong or Singapore was a minimum of six hours. Through Lucy's account one can witness the sense that maybe her family did not fully consider the outcomes of their decision to move to another country because now they are at the mercy of this giant 'mechanical bird'.

The recollection that most participants had about their first few weeks in New Zealand was their disgust at the food. All the youngsters were used to having meals cooked by their family members with indigenous ingredients back in Nepal. But when they moved to New Zealand the ingredients they were used to were unavailable and the people who usually did their cooking were not allowed into the kitchen areas so the meal time became a struggle. It can be witnessed that the need to survive eventually took over for most participants and they began eating the food that they got only to avoid starvation. The kindness shown to the refugees at the Mangere centre by the Indian religious group is much cherished – especially by the Bhutanese. The religious group spending time with the Bhutanese and taking them on pilgrimages and giving them food went a long way in helping them cope with their resettlement. The cultures of the Bhutanese and that of New Zealand are drastically different so interacting with a group that shared a similar culture, food and practiced similar religious beliefs gave the Bhutanese a sense that they were not isolated on a different planet and that their religion and culture was practiced in their new home as well. It can be observed that the Bhutanese refugees had their first sense of belonging with the Indian religious group in Auckland.

Lack of English skills was a stressor for most of the participants but it should be observed how each participant experienced the stress differently. For some it was the fear that they were being plotted against while some others felt bad at not being able to assist the parents. The underlying stressor over English skills for these participants however can be attributed to the fact that they were lacking in skills to begin their new life. The participants were all thrust in a new country where they had to build up new lives and yet the most basic requirement of language was not given to them. Some participants reported that they just did not know what to do or who was going to help them get their work done but it could have been the case that they were given the information in writing or were explained what would happen once they arrived but the information was given to them in a language they didn't understand.

No participant recounted any process or even any interest that went behind them being assigned Christchurch as their home city. This could also be attributed to their lack of understanding – the information might have been provided but they did not understand what it meant for them. Another possible explanation for this experience could be that all the participants had already experienced untold number of decisions made for them including their host country, their food and their daily schedules, so in the end another decision where they would not have any say did not really matter. Additionally the participants and their families did not know anything about New Zealand and what the differences in the cities would be so even if they were given options they may not have known which to pick. Some participants however were relieved to get Christchurch only because they already had family members who were living here.

The Bhutanese youth can also be witnessed adopting various strategies to deal with the challenges of an uncertain life overseas. Some of the participants sought out their time-tested strategies of seeking to make friends. This time it was an exciting prospect as they had the chance to make friends with people from different backgrounds, rather than only Nepalese. Other participants can be seen resorting to more individualistic coping methods like focussing on their inner strength and trusting in their own capabilities to see them through their challenges.

Part Four - The Canterbury Earthquakes

‘It’s shaking! What could that be?’

The Canterbury earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 were major events in the lives of all the participants. It was a first time experience for all of them and their families as until that time none reported experiencing any earthquakes while back in Nepal or Bhutan. The following section attempts to capture the participant’s lived experience during the major earthquakes. Most participants responded with horror, sadness and in some cases even regret over coming to New Zealand.

Lisa recalls being woken up by her sister on the morning of September 4th 2010 while it was still dark outside and all her sister kept saying was “What is that? What is happening?” Lisa’s first response was irritation at having her sleep disturbed and she remembers getting even more irritated because her sister was sobbing uncontrollably. Lisa and her sister were alone in the house on that night and Lisa had not felt anything so she left her room and went and scouted the rest of the house and she remembers seeing all their dishware shattered on the floor. And then she felt the ground shaking –

“And then I actually felt it! And I was wondering why everything was moving. And everything was like all on the floor and broken. And my sister was just crying.”

Lisa recounts feeling extremely irritated because she couldn’t figure out what was happening and also because her sister would not stop crying. Their mother and other family members were asleep in another house in their neighbourhood so Lisa decided that they should go there and that finally someone would be able to calm the sister down. While they were walking towards the other house another aftershock occurred and Lisa felt that she was in a horror film where there was no one on the streets and the trees were dancing in the dark (a cliché in children’s horror movies) –

“But when we got there [her other house] there was nobody outside. And we just stood there, the ground was shaking and the trees were just shaking like this [makes actions of swaying] and my sister was crying again and said like just stop. And then we ran to our other home where everyone was sleeping.”

When Lisa described her experience of the first earthquake she did recount a bit of confusion since she couldn't figure out what was happening but her primary emotion that night was irritation with her sisters incessant crying. Even in the days that followed Lisa did not recall getting too disturbed when she heard the reports over the news. She felt content that no one had lost their lives and it was just structures that had been damaged. Lisa's reaction of not being disturbed by the earthquakes effects were probably because she was used to seeing structures destroyed by natural calamities in Nepal. Lisa recounted that following the earthquakes in 2010, many former refugee families began leaving Christchurch and going to live in other cities but Lisa's family decided against it. She remembers her father telling her that if they were meant to die then running to another city was not going to save them.

The second major earthquake in February 2011 was a horrifying experience for Lisa because she had heard over the radio that a lot of damage and deaths had taken place at the city centre and most of her siblings were there at the time since it was a working day and the earthquake occurred around lunch time. As she describes –

"A lot of buildings fell and lots of people died. My eldest sister was in a tall building and we were very worried about her because she was working in the city in a hotel. I was scared for my brothers because they were at school when the earthquake happened so it was difficult to contact them because even the phone signal had gone so I was really worried [breaks off]."

Along with worry for her siblings Lisa also remembers feeling fortunate to be alive because a few hours before the earthquake her friends made a plan to go to the city centre for an outing but since it was a cloudy day Lisa didn't feel quite in the mood of going so she declined their request and just came home. While recalling this ill-fated day Lisa said that had she gone to the city with her friends she may not have been alive today.

As a result of the earthquakes and resulting aftershocks (particularly of 2011) Lisa's house got a bit damaged and hence her family was too scared to live indoors. They started camping outside on their lawn and even Lisa's relatives joined them and lived with them for a few weeks. This might have been a stressful time for some of those involved but for Lisa it was a picnic. She remembers how they even had to cook their meals over the firewood and this feeling along with being around a lot of people

reminded her of Nepal and the way she grew up. These living situations made all other feelings of the earthquake fade into the background for her –

"Ummm I mean we used to cook outside in a fire and it actually tasted quite nice [laughs], we had some relatives who came and stayed with us because they were new to Christchurch when the earthquake happened and they stayed her for a month or so because they were really scared. We were really scared that time too but at least we were all together so it was ok. It was a bit of a game for us."

When asked what factors helped her deal with the tensions of the earthquake Lisa's first response was – *"being with my family and friends. They are important for me".* Apart from this Lisa recalled that she found it helpful to just keep herself occupied with something, that way she has no time to stress over things and it helps her forget the things she doesn't like.

"Well I just used to go to my work and on weekends I would go out with my families. I used to just go out with my friends for shopping and stuff. And I don't have a lot of free time, I keep myself busy. I don't keep it in my heart I just forget about it. Even with the earthquakes I just forget about it, I don't know why I just don't keep any bad things in my mind."

For Riyaz, recalling the earthquake in 2010 brings back memories of fear and confusion. When he felt the ground shaking for the first time in the early hours of that day Riyaz believed that dacoits (armed burglars) were trying to break into his house. This was triggered by his memories of those times in Nepal when dacoits tried to break into their huts at the refugee camp; the huts were all made of bamboo and were quite low hence dacoits usually attacked from the top of the houses, so when they jumped onto the roof of the hut the whole structure would shake. This illustrates how people turn to their knowledge base of events to interpret an unknown event.

Riyaz then recalled that as soon as the shaking ceased they ran to their neighbour's house (who were also Bhutanese). They didn't know what had caused the shaking or what it meant nor did they know if anything was going to happen after that, but they felt safer with their neighbours. Riyaz recalled that his parents were so frightened that all they could do in that moment was pray to God for protection. Their

sense of fear was heightened by the fact that they didn't know what it was. Riyaz and his family had also been recently resettled and had not lived in Christchurch for very long so this also caused them to feel frustrated because they didn't know what was going to happen to them after this or if anyone was going to come and help them.

Riyaz recalled that his family's house was quite damaged with the 2010 earthquake and hence they had to live with their neighbours. Riyaz recounted that during this time along with stress and confusion his family and he also went through a lot of emotional pain because somehow the earthquake and all the aftershocks that followed shook not only their house but also their sense of peace, joy and security that they had come to enjoy since moving to New Zealand. Not being able to live in their own house also affected Riyaz's daily routine. He describes this time of his life as -

"Yeah and then our neighbours from Nepal we stayed at theirs at night and we cooked like outside in the backyard it was hard. We had a wait a bit before people came and said it's all good to live in our house. Oh the aftershocks were bad. They kept breaking us. I mean we didn't feel safe when like aftershocks keep occurred and then yeah cooking wasn't that good, sleeping wasn't that good. Yeah No one felt safe."

When the second earthquake in 2011 occurred Riyaz remembers being alone at home. This earthquake occurred in the afternoon and even though it took him unaware, this time he knew what it was and knew how to respond. Riyaz was terrified as he saw all the belongings from his house falling down and the dishware being dashed to pieces. When the shaking stopped rather than staying in his own house Riyaz ran to check on his neighbours' children and then called his parents and siblings to make sure they were ok. In hindsight, Riyaz says that this kind of behaviour (of checking on others safety) comes naturally to him as he is the eldest in his household and many a time has been given the task of looking after the young ones.

After the 2010 earthquakes Riyaz and his family had learned how to respond to an earthquake. This knowledge managed to save them when the second major earthquake hit but it could not save their house, it was completely damaged and declared by the council as not fit for living in. Luckily Riyaz and his family had Bhutanese neighbours who took them in until they had their house restored. But even the house of their neighbours had been damaged to an extent hence all cooking had to be done outdoors. Riyaz recalls that after the second earthquake they felt more *'sad than*

scared'. This sadness was caused by them being reduced to the same conditions they were living in Nepal – of not having a proper house and having to cook and lead most of their lives outdoors. These were the circumstances that they had wanted to leave behind when they left Nepal yet they earthquakes had reduced them back to it. Riyaz described a particular sense of loss after the earthquake of 2011 –

"Seeing the second earthquake, and you know? On the TV and watching all those people. And hearing about all those people who passed away and all the houses and buildings that got destroyed that was a bit difficult because I used to go town and city every day. So it was difficult it didn't feel good. It made me feel sad because your used to all the stuff that goes with the city, all the events and all the people all the malls and buildings… used to it but when it got destroyed it was like I'm not going to get that anymore. I'm not going to enjoy the city anymore."

Encapsulated within this comment is Riyaz's sense of deep sadness at seeing a city being taken away from him – for the second time. The first time was when he had to leave Nepal, but somehow that decision was justifiable. There was something about the damage caused by the earthquakes that seemed to have no explanation. The damage that Riyaz had witnessed in his life hitherto had been caused primarily by humans but for the first time he recounted a damage so great that was caused by nature. In his lamentation above one can also witness how Riyaz has still not come to terms with the fact that a natural force can take so many lives and cause so much destruction.

Riyaz recalled two sources of support that helped him cope during these stressful times – the first was being with his neighbours because somehow they felt safe when they were together. The second was aid given by a resettlement agency which provided some basic necessities and subsequently offered the Bhutanese community the chance to go and live in Dunedin temporarily until they got their homes repaired or were given alternate homes. Riyaz recalled that the trip away from Christchurch was a much needed distraction for his family and him and for the first time since Mangere centre they felt that the government was looking after them. When they returned back to their homes after a few weeks, they brought a fresher perspective to things and were able to process and deal with the damage caused by the earthquake in a better way.

Saki recalls that the night before the major earthquake in September 2010 she had a friend stay over at her home and they were reading books about natural disasters and joking over what each of them would do if one of these actually happened. But in the early hours of the next day when the earthquake actually occurred they were caught completely unaware and none of the information they had read in the books ended up being of any use to them. Saki's recollection of the first earthquake and the few minutes after it hit present a sense of complete disarray and confusion –

"I didn't know what was happening; I just thought it was like the world ending. And I just saw my friend crying and then I got out of the room. And like we went outside and my parents were like "No! We don't go outside" and it was just like so now what should we do? Because we were never told that in case of earthquake we do that or that?? So we never knew and we just went outside and I was just praying, I was like on my knees and I was like 'please stop this"

Saki's recollection also illustrates her drawing on her existing knowledge to interpret the hitherto unknown event in her life i.e. the shaking. Even though Saki had read about earthquakes she didn't know what they would feel like in reality so when the one in 2010 occurred it felt easier to believe something as absurd as the end of the world rather than a natural disaster. And the fact that the shaking occurred in the dark fuelled her interpretation.

Along with having to deal with the disarray in her house caused by the shaking Saki recounted another event that occurred with the shaking that caused her more horror than the actual shaking. Saki described that their house became a mess because the shaking had thrown all their belongings down and scattered their furniture. In addition they had to manoeuvre their way in the darkness because somehow the shaking had affected the power lines. And in the midst of the disarray she saw her brother rush for the staircase with only the light from his mobile phone to guide him and as he reached the staircase a tremor occurred that caused him to lose his footing. Saki watched in horror as her brother fell headlong down the stairs. And before anyone had a chance to react the tremor managed to dislodge the heat pump that was directly above the staircase and her brother and it just collapsed on top of him.

"That part was like really really emotional for me because I really didn't understand the earthquake and all that because I've never experienced that. The worst

part was when my brother fell down the stairs and yeah. I started crying after that because I just. [breaks off and gets teary eyed]"

Saki recounted this incident with a sense of overwhelming guilt. On one hand was the guilt that she was right there and could not act in time to prevent the accident and on the other hand she was overcome by her guilt because this was the brother towards whom she had harboured anger over their resettlement. Saki resented her brother for making all the decisions for their family and taking them out of Nepal without even telling her. But watching him get wounded so gravely made her realise that if her brother were gone then there would be no one who would take care of them and guide them in their life in Christchurch. In that moment Saki also acknowledged that if this accident claimed her brother's life then she would never get the opportunity to make peace with him and the decisions he made for their family. And in her anguish all Saki could do was pray to God to save her family because nothing seemed to be in any one's control at the time.

Saki does not remember much after this event and what happened over the next few weeks apart from her damaged house and the Red Cross workers coming and providing them some basic necessities. For the earthquake that struck in February 2011 Saki recalls being calmer and prepared how to react. When the big earthquake hit in the afternoon Saki was at school and being around her school mates made the experience less stressful. Saki then remembers being told to go home and while she was home alone a couple of aftershock's struck. Saki recounts that this was a funny experience for her as long as she was alone –

"And I was there watching TV and another earthquake hit and I went under the table and it was like it was holding on to the table and I was like watching the TV still because it was my favourite show [giggles]. But then there was another one again and our chimney had fallen down and then I saw mum coming from the city and she was crying and holding me. Yeah that was very hard."

Saki recounted that that hardest part after the earthquakes for her was being around people because all they seemed to do was magnify the events and they were constantly complaining.

"Mum would not stop complaining about it [giggles] and our whole family thought that the world was going to end because of the earthquakes [giggles nervously]

and umm they wouldn't stop talking about it. But for me it was like, it's happened, it's gone, it's past forget about it. But they wouldn't stop talking about it. It's stuck in their memories. It's just in there and it doesn't go away at all. So it was hard coping with it."

Saki describes herself as a person with her own inner strength and she can find a way through any situation life throws at her. One of the things she does to cope is not dwell on things that are past but being around her family and other community members made forgetting the earthquakes very hard. Saki's description about her preferring to forget events that disturb her could explain why her recollections of the earthquakes were very sparse.

When asked how she managed to deal with the challenges post the earthquakes Saki recalled that it was her ability to laugh at things that helped her. Fortunately her brother only suffered broken ribs from the impact of the heat pump so she did not have to deal with any traumatic after effects of his accident. Saki also preferred not to discuss the earthquakes much because she feels that process is not very helpful but instead makes the experiences 'stick' in her mind. Performance arts like dancing and creative arts like writing stories also helped Saki process her feelings about the earthquake. She recalled that above all else these methods gave her things to think about other than earthquake damage. Apart from being a strong person Saki also describes herself as someone who wants to experience everything in life –

"You know I'm the type of person who wants to experience everything in life like. Like not only the good things but bad things as well. So even if it's like world end I want to be there alive to see it. Yeah that kind of person. So I just laughed at it rather than talking about it."

When Lucy recalled her first experience of an earthquake she remembers thinking that someone was under her bed playing pranks on her. For the first earthquake in 2010 her entire household was fast asleep when the shaking occurred, so when Lucy was awoken by it all she could bring herself to believe was that someone (or something) was having a joke on her –

"That was the first time I experienced an earthquake. And I just got up and I looked everywhere because it was dark and I couldn't see anything and I just like looked under my bed [giggles] and I didn't see anything. I was so scared and I covered my head like with my blankets until my Dad came shouting"

Lucy's description once again conjures up how people resort to interpreting an unknown phenomenon with knowledge that they find believable even if it is something as inconceivable as something hiding under your bed. When Lucy finally heard her father voice she realised that others in her home had felt what she felt and began thinking that a fire had broken out in her home. Once again this illustrates how Lucy chose to think the shaking meant something that she could believe even though she did not remember seeing or smelling any smoke or anything that might indicate that her home was on fire. Lucy also recalled that her family was totally unprepared for the aftermath of the earthquake. The earthquake had damaged the power lines and Lucy's neighbourhood was plunged into total darkness and Lucy recounts that her family did not even have any candles at that time and hence spent the rest of the night in darkness not knowing what damage had been done. Lucy also remembered that her parents started crying over their decision to come to Nepal because back there even if they had any emergency they knew how to deal with it and who would come to assist them but when they faced their first major emergency situation in New Zealand they didn't even know what it was – let alone who was going to help them. Her parents started feeling that if this was going to be their new life then it would be better for them to go back to Nepal where at least they had some degree of predictability in their lives.

In the daylight Lucy remembers scouting her house to see what had happened during the night and was sad to see that her beautiful home had cracks in the walls and ceiling. All the families' dishware had fallen off their shelves in the kitchen and were dashed to pieces on the floor. Lucy remembers this as her first costly cultural practice in Christchurch. It is part of Nepali culture to stack dishes up on wall mounted platforms but in Nepal they weren't any earthquakes so they did not have to worry about their dishes being thrown off. Lucy recalled that her family was unable to deal with all these events on their own and so they packed their belongings and moved to a relative's house. Lucy remembers thinking that her relatives probably had their house damaged as well and may not be able to take them in but at that point in time all her family

members could think of was that they did not want to be alone and would rather be with their relatives even if their house was damaged.

Lucy recounted that moving to her relative's house was what made the difficulties of the earthquake easier to cope with. Even though her relative's house had also been damaged and they had to do their cooking and sleeping outside the house, Lucy recalled that being around others who were as scared as her, was helpful as they could share their fears and sadness with each other. Also, living together meant that they had to cook their meals and eat together which all the youngsters including Lucy considered a fun thing. Apart from this, sharing meals was a big part of their lives in Nepal and for the first time since moving to Christchurch they had the opportunity to do so again. Lucy acknowledges that this was made possible only because of the earthquakes. Lucy also says that her friends and family are her biggest allies and she would rather be around them during a crisis. Having her home destroyed was not so much of a disaster but if she had been separated from her family and friends then that would definitely have been a disaster for her.

"I guess talking helps and yeah cooking together and sharing like we could have gone and bought dry food from the super market but you know in our culture food is really important, although I never cooked [giggles]. My friendships are important. Friends and family, both are important for me. They are the ones that helped me. I couldn't tell some things to my family but I have to share with my friends and they gave my encouragement"

Madhuri's recollection of the first earthquake in her life is a blend of confusion, fear and hysterical laughter. When she experienced her first earthquake in September 2010 she was fast asleep in the same bedroom as her aunt. She remembers a thud and a shaking and at that moment could only think of one thing – dacoits. She recalls that her house started shaking the same way their huts shook back in Nepal when dacoits attempted to break in. But in Christchurch she was with her aunt who had a little more knowledge and immediately began screaming that it was an earthquake. Madhuri recalls being in total shock and utterly confused at what was happening that she just remained frozen in her bed. She saw her aunt charge into the next room where her younger brother was sleeping, pick him up and run down the stairs. Only when her aunt

realised that Madhuri had not followed them did she run back up-stairs and yell out, "Just come down girl, this thing is an earthquake. If it keeps happening then very soon volcanoes will come too". Madhuri's fear just increased at that moment and she just left her bed and ran.

But rather than follow her aunt downstairs Madhuri ran in search of her parents while the house was still shaking. When she burst into her parent's room she saw that they were praying to God and laughing at the same time. Madhuri remembers not knowing how to react so she started laughing with her parents –

"And I then realised what she [aunty] means and I felt so scared. Then I just ran to my mom's room and it was still going like that [gesticulates to show shaking] When I opened their door they were laughing and I told them that there was an earthquake and they were saying "Ram! Ram!" like God, God save us save us!!! I too started laughing because we were scared and they didn't know what to do. And after that we just went down and just went out from the house but I thought it was really not safe because we really don't know [breaks off]"

Madhuri described her neighbourhood on that night as a scene of utter chaos. There were people running helter-skelter as most didn't seem to know what to do or where to go. Something had affected the power lines and so the entire area was in darkness. All Madhuri remembers hearing are a blur of sounds of people crying and people raising their voices trying to reach their family members over the phone but even the cell phone signal had been affected. In the midst of it all Madhuri remembers a group of immigrants who had never before experienced an earthquake who were crying and lamenting that very soon there was going to be a volcano in which everyone was going to die. Madhuri recounts being beyond terrified at that time and she just clung on to her mother as she believed what they people was saying and felt that she wasn't ready to die yet.

Madhuri says that she lost count of all the aftershocks that took place after the first earthquake but she did recall the next major earthquake that took place in February 2011. For the earthquake that occurred five months earlier Madhuri and her family were completely unaware as to how to respond, but after that volunteers went around to their homes explaining how to take shelter in an earthquake and whom to call if there were injuries. But all this knowledge was of no use to Madhuri because when the earthquake

occurred she was at school and she recounts that all the children were either excited or terrified at the prospect of another earthquake and so they all started running around and screaming rather than taking shelter. Madhuri recounts that she too just joined in the maelstrom until her leg was injured as a result of being trampled on.

Madhuri remembers leaving the school shortly thereafter with a relative. On the way back to their home an aftershock occurred and this was Madhuri's first experience of an earthquake while she was outdoors in broad daylight. She describes this experience with an overwhelming sense of fear and discombobulation –

"We just came back to our home and when we were on the way there was a building nearby which was just falling down [makes actions to show collapsing], the car was like shaking and I tried to get out from the car and I just tried to take out the seatbelt. After 2 or 3 minutes the car stopped shaking and we went back home and everything was like Oh My God! [Gasps] Fallen down like all our frames had just fallen down and cracked and water was coming out from the ground. It was really dangerous even more than the first one."

Madhuri recalled that her family's home was quite damaged after the earthquake in 2011 hence they could not live in it until repairs were completed. Madhuri's family was unable to deal with all the devastation around them and hence with the help of some agencies, temporarily shifted to Auckland. Madhuri's family stayed in Auckland for a couple of months before returning to Christchurch. Madhuri and her siblings were temporarily enrolled in Auckland's local schools so that they would not fall behind in their school work and Madhuri acknowledges that being made to study and make new friends actually helped take their mind off all that had happened and kept them occupied. Even the grown-ups didn't speak that much about the earthquakes, Madhuri wasn't sure if this was them being strong in front of the children or if they were really distracted by their routine in Auckland but she remembers that it was very comforting to see her parents not very upset and getting on with their lives. Another highlight for Madhuri in Auckland was getting to meet with the Indian religious group that had taken care of them while they were at Mangere centre. Even on their second trip this group met with the former refugees and shared meals with them, which Madhuri remembers being a huge relief to her family that someone from the community actually cared about them.

When the time came to return to their homes Madhuri was devastated to find out that some of her relatives were too scared to go back to Christchurch and had decided to settle in other parts of New Zealand. Madhuri's parents had made up their minds to come back to Christchurch but she pleaded with them to follow their relatives so that they could all be together but her father's reply was, "We cannot follow them, we have to go our own way. If something happens there [in their new city] they will run away to some other place, do you usually behave like that?" And so it came to pass that Madhuri was separated from some of her extended family when she returned to Christchurch.

Madhuri presently, no longer fears earthquakes and she is confident that if another one occurs she would not run helter-skelter but would take cover and guide others to do the same. When asked what gives her the courage to persevere in her circumstances she says that it is her faith in herself –

"I don't want to die. At that time yeah it was quite hard and most of the things are quite scary. But now I don't feel scared anymore because it's [the earthquakes] just happening and happening and it's nothing. I think everything is fine now. Should be I'm a strong girl. I want to be strong always."

Drishya's recollection of his first experience of an earthquake is hazy as he recalls being exhausted from socialising and drinking the night before. Like most of the Bhutanese youth Drishya was not familiar with earthquakes and did not know what it would be like to be in the midst of one. Drishya had been out socialising with his friends the night before the first earthquake in September 2010 and he chose to spend the night at one of his friend's as he had been drinking and didn't feel up to returning to his own home. When the first shaking happened Drishya remembers thinking that it was someone shaking the bed that he was sleeping on and so he just turned over and continued to sleep. But when the shakes continued someone in the room awoke and started screaming that it was an earthquake and that's when everyone else woke up and started 'freaking out'. Drishya's first reaction was guilt over not being with his family and so he got dressed and ran home in the dark to check on his family and he recalls being relieved to discover that they were unharmed, otherwise he said that he wouldn't know how to forgive himself for not being with them.

In the days that followed Drishya recalled feeling desolate and regretted supporting his mother to move to New Zealand because he could see her struggling. For him the earthquake not only shook and damaged their homes but also damaged their dreams of building up a new life which would be free from 'troubles' like the type they had in the refugee camps. Drishya described that time with a sense of disheartenment –

"I mean being new and all made it real tough, we came from Nepal with high expectations and then we got here and we couldn't work so we were living on benefit and then comes the earthquake which puts more and more stress on you, so it just magnified the problems that we had in our transitional phase.. I think this period was even more stressful for my mom than for me because I wasn't providing for the family but my mom was and with the earthquakes there were so many things that were out of service."

The first earthquake of 2010 was the hardest because it was a first time experience for the Bhutanese community. Drishya recalls that after the first earthquake volunteers came around and briefed them on how to take cover in an earthquake. Even though the aftershocks persisted and another major earthquake struck five months after the first one, Drishya recalls that he somehow found a way to deal with it –

"There were so many things about it [the earthquake] that were happening around me and I just like got used to it then and found my strength"

But another memory of the earthquakes that Drishya has is how all his community members came together and began living together. His mother hosted three other families apart from their own and as Drishya recalls it was a 'full house' but it also meant that they were supporting each other and sharing each other's stress through this difficult phase. Being around their community members also made them feel cared for and gave them things to occupy themselves with rather than focusing on only the earthquake. Drishya describes being around his community members as –

"It's like luggage you know? If someone comes and picks it up on the other side it becomes easier because there is like distribution of the load and you are not as stressed, you know when there is someone around you, you're constantly talking and not just focusing on earthquake! Earthquake! Earthquake! I think that one way to get through a problem is not to think about the problem and I think we did it that way at the time of the earthquake by just being around people."

Drishya also remembers that his community was being supported by resettlement agencies and they were offered the option of going to Dunedin for a few weeks while their homes were being repaired, which was a refreshing change of environment. He recalled with sadness how he along with many of his community members regretted coming to New Zealand and even at the end of their stay in Dunedin began considering settling in Dunedin or moving to another city altogether as they couldn't bear to return to their damaged houses. Drishya believes that his main source of support at this time was his mother – who somehow managed to rise above these circumstances.

Drishya also recalled that they were offered some additional assistance by the government and agencies like the Red Cross but he was relieved to see that they were getting the same assistance as everyone else in their locality. Drishya didn't want to be treated differently and be given extra help just because he had a refugee background. Ever since coming to New Zealand he and his family began working on building a new life and they wanted to cease being referred to and viewed as refugees. It was one of his little victories when he saw that there was no help being specifically targeted towards his community because according to him it was one indication that they were not being treated as refugees anymore.

"I don't want to feel that way; I don't want to be a refugee for the rest of my life. I was glad that there wasn't any help that was targeted specifically for refugees [after the earthquakes] I am not saying that there should have been some because everyone was going through the same thing, I don't think that we should have been prioritized or anything. It's fine to be treated like everyone else."

Lavanya describes her experience of an earthquake with a sense of utter confusion. Problems and difficulties were not new to Lavanya but whenever she was faced with a problem in the past she knew she would be able to find a way to deal with it. When she experienced her first earthquake it was in a new country and it occurred when it was totally dark in the early hours of the morning. Apart from not knowing what it was Lavanya also remembers not knowing what she was supposed to do – all she remembers is that what was happening did not feel right and the most logical

response was to flee. Even when talking about this experience years later Lavanya finds it difficult to express in words what exactly she felt on that night.

"So I was asleep and then I heard Dad screaming and then everything was going [makes actions to show swaying] and the noise and stuff and I got up and I tried to turn on the light but it didn't work... I thought it's the start of World War III... I didn't know what I was thinking [laughs nervously] and then I just picked up my sister and ran.. I don't know how I did that because everything was going like that and then somehow we made it outside the door. We had never experienced an earthquake before and it was quite a big thing for us."

Lavanya's memories for the days after the earthquake are blurry and she does not remember much apart from being very scared over what would happen to them. Lavanya's recollections of the next major earthquake in February 2011 are more vivid. Lavanya's first recollection of that earthquake was of her being all alone. She was at school when the first shake happened and then she immediately left her school and ran to her sisters' schools to collect them. Lavanya then returned to their home to find that neither of her parents were there. Lavanya remembers being completely horrified as this was the first time that there was such an emergency situation and she was without her parents. Lavanya was also left as the sole caregiver for her two young sisters and this terrified her even more. As she recalls,

"My mind was really not working, I didn't know where I was going and it was just so hard for me. I was just lost I didn't know what to do, my sisters were crying, I had no idea what to do."

Lavanya's words capture her sense of desperation at being left all alone with her two sisters who were too young to support her in any way. Lavanya also remembers that she had no one else to turn to as all her neighbours and relatives who lived nearby had run to the hills fearing a Tsunami and her parents only returned to their home late at night. Lavanya still gets emotional while recalling seeing her parents return home after being stranded an entire day without them. The experience of the earthquakes, particularly the one in 2011 (which was accompanied by more damage and loss of life) made Lavanya's existential struggle come to the surface of her life again. Growing up in the refugee camp she always wondered why her people were cursed with such a bad lot in life but then her family managed to get resettled in New Zealand and Lavanya

thought this was could be their new beginning. But then came the series of major earthquakes and aftershocks that destroyed their sense of peace and again Lavanya began to wonder why misfortune always seemed to be following them –

"It's like why do we even have to go through this. Just WHY???? We had such a hard life and stuff and then what's more left to happen? Can't we just have a break? Why do we even have to….?? It stops you from pretty much everything. You just get that fear and then and it just like stays there and then. It doesn't feel good."

Lavanya remembered that her parents started regretting the decision to leave Nepal and were actually thinking of ways through which they might be able to return to their former lives. They remained in a deep shock for many days because the earthquakes had caught them unaware and they continued to be rattled by all the aftershocks. Lavanya in particular remained on edge because she was terrified at being separated from her parents. A few days after the second major earthquake Lavanya's father decided to take the family to Auckland for a change in environment and also since Lavanya's younger sister suffered from a heart condition. The trip to Auckland was a welcome break but Lavanya knew that everyone was scared of the return to Christchurch at the back of their minds. At this time Lavanya recalls turning to another one of her personal mantras (something she used to do when things got tough in the refugee camp) –

"We had to come back [to Christchurch], whatever happens just happens. You just have to keep going and you can't make any excuse to get away from life."

Lavanya recalls that she and her family returned to Christchurch after a few weeks in Auckland and busied themselves with clearing up their home and getting immersed in their schools/jobs. This was a very tough time for Lavanya because even though she found things to keep herself occupied with there was this feeling of 'dread and apprehension' that perpetually clung to her and which was exacerbated by the recurring aftershocks. Lavanya recalls coping with this phase in her life by enjoying the little things that she used to take for granted because these could be snatched away at any moment. Lavanya also recalled that she found her strength by facing all that she used to dread – in this case facing the damage of her home and the city and the loss of lives. She acknowledges that only after facing these circumstances did she start feeling confident in her life again.

Adam recounts that on that morning he was roused from his sleep by his parents' screams. At that point he recalls waking up but being much disoriented. Since he had never heard about or experienced any earthquakes in his life he relied on what he could see and his physical sensations to interpret what was happening. His only recollection at that time was, "I was really afraid when I first felt it and I thought we were all meant to die!" But Adam was at a loss for words to describe exactly what he was experiencing -

"I don't really know what to say about it. It was my first experience of an earthquake you know? I felt like the earth is coming up and when the earthquake came the whole thing was going like [gesticulates to show toppling over] and the trees fell down and so we all went and sat on the ground."

Adam recalled that once the shaking stopped he ran outside his house and all he could see was damaged roads and houses. All that he saw at that time brought back his memories of the refugee camp in Nepal and the destruction that was wreaked upon them there.

"Everywhere I walked the ground was cracked and you know the road had cracked up all over and there was water coming up from inside, some trees had fallen. In Modon [the name of the camp] I saw similar stuff you know like the people [locals] burning the school building and damage the houses you know? It made me scared that time too because I couldn't stop it or help any people. Fights start, innocent people get injured, some get killed and a lot of houses are in danger."

Adam's words are an illustration of his powerlessness. In the refugee camp he felt that there was nothing he could do to change his predicament and as a result all he could do was stand by and watch as his community was repeatedly attacked by the locals. When he saw the earthquake damage caused in his neighbourhood on that night in September all he could think of was that same feeling of powerlessness as he could not do anything to stop whatever it was that was happening. Adam's feelings were exacerbated by the fact that his house was damaged and they couldn't live in it until it was fixed. Living outdoors and having to cook on makeshift stoves and use makeshift toilets made him feel that he had been reduced to his living conditions of Nepal. This was a tough time for Adam particularly because he felt that had the same thing happened in Nepal at least they had their neighbours and friends to help them and they

knew that eventually an agency representative would provide some relief. But in Christchurch he recalled feeling 'stuck' because they didn't even know where they could go and get clean water from.

When asked how he managed to get through these challenging circumstances, Adam said that it was by being around his family and the few Nepalese friends he had in Christchurch. Even though all of them had to endure living outdoors in Christchurch's biting cold weather, there was some degree of comfort in knowing that all the people from his community had experienced this earthquake for the first time and were all struggling equally with the after effects –

"Yeah my friends, they talk to me and find out what's going on [after the earthquakes]. My friends who came from Nepal, like when it happened we all gathered in one place and we all stayed together and sat and had a chat and we could share our story of how it was in the earthquake and we could share our own stuff and then you feel like… fine you know? It's like after we share our things to others then they can share their things to us and we can understand each other."

As is evident from the narratives of the Bhutanese youth the earthquake in September 2010 was the very first one they and their families experienced in their lives so when it actually occurred it was met with confusion. Most participants did not even know what meaning to ascribe to what was happening – ground shaking, dishware breaking, trees swaying, loss of electricity and cries in the dark. It can be gleaned that most participants found it easier in that moment to believe something that they were familiar with like a fire, someone kicking the bed or a dacoit attack. But some participants even believed the shaking was something as absurd as a world war or a monster hiding under the bed (something of which they had no prior experience). This conjures up how when people are caught unaware by a threatening phenomenon of which they have had no prior experience, their interpretations of that phenomenon are governed more by previous experiences or emotions than understanding.

All the participants also expressed the lack of orientation around natural disasters and how they should respond prior to the 2010 earthquake and as a result there is a constant lamentation of "I just didn't know what to do" in the narratives of these participants. Unlike any disaster they faced in Nepal in this scenario they didn't know

what to do or where they could run to for help. When the next major earthquake struck in 2011 all the participants were better informed and felt confident that they could save themselves. There were those like Madhuri who didn't get a chance to put into action what was told to her owing to the pandemonium created by her school mates but she acknowledges that it was on account of their emotional state at the time and not because they were ill informed.

The regret of having chosen to resettle can also be witnessed in some narratives. These participants felt that if they had to face such trying circumstances then it might have been better to just stay in an environment they were familiar with – the refugee camp. Although the feeling of powerlessness was only verbalized by Adam it is present in varying degrees with the other participants. An example is in the case of Lavanya – who laments, "Why does this keep happening to us?" Or even with Saki, Riyaz and Madhuri who called out to God to save them because they found there was nothing they were able to do.

But it should also be noted that even though all participants reported being frightened by the earthquake – particularly the first one in 2010 and unsure of what was going to happen to them, none has reported being crushed by the experience of it. This is an illustration of the young people's resilient factor. Lavanya was one participant who can be seen questioning fate on why her family also has to suffer but at the same time she acknowledges that she has to face her difficulties and not run away from reality. Other participants like Saki, Lisa and Madhuri can be witnessed focussing on their personality factors that help them get through their difficulties and in the case of Drishya it can be seen how he drew inspiration from his mother during trying life circumstances. Having friends and family act as protective factors was another aspect that helped the majority of the participants cope with the situation. The role of friends and family can be best presented in the words of Drishya who reported that being around their people after the earthquakes meant that they were all sharing each other's emotional burdens. Additionally being around their families and friends gave them other things to think about, for instance, how to cook and feed so many people and where would all these people sleep, rather than just focusing on the damage caused by the earthquake. Lucy and Lisa reported being able to deal with any challenge so long as they were not separated from their close friends and families.

Another supportive factor that the Bhutanese youth reported after the earthquakes was resettlement agency's support towards temporarily leaving Christchurch. The participants who were able to go to another city for a while reported that when they returned to Christchurch they brought a fresher perspective and felt capable of handling the damage that had been done to their homes. Some participants reported that just being offered this opportunity made them feel that their new host country's government actually cared about their needs and well-being and this in turn kindled a sense of belonging and of being cared for.

The 'essence' of the participants' lived experiences

In the sections above, one can witness the participants' experiences of beginning their lives and spending their childhood and early teenage-hood in the camps and subsequently one can witness their leaving the camp with their families and their attempts to begin new lives in New Zealand. The great Canterbury earthquakes were a major event in all their lives and most of them spoke about these when talking of their new lives in Christchurch. Certain elements or themes emerged from the narratives of the participants, particularly ones that captured the ways in which they survived their 'hard times' in the refugee camp and the factors that motivated them to persevere against the tides of injustice and poverty that they reported continually facing.

Van Manen (1990, 2014) recommends that a researcher reflect on the textural and structural lived experiences through the major themes that emerge from the data and then describe the 'essence' of these experiences through writing. Van Manen (2014) states that the 'essence' of an experience is what helps explore the phenomenon in detail by also offering some possible interpretations of it, such that a reader is able to understand the depth of the phenomenon. In this research, the 'essence' of the participants experiences were derived from describing the prominent themes that emerged from the narratives. It should also be noted that essence and themes are not the same thing. A theme is the first unit of meaning that is assigned to an element within the data. Multiple themes which have commonalities running through them are then

merged to form an essence. The 'essences' of the lived experiences of the former Bhutanese refugees' is presented in the section below.

"That sense of connection we had in the camp, it was so natural… I miss that"

- Drishya

Having a strong sense of community and knowing that there are people who understand you and will rise to the occasion if you are in trouble was a factor reported by all participants and indicates one of the major ways they dealt with their circumstances in the refugee camp – and is so aptly captured in the excerpt above. As mentioned elsewhere in this chapter this sense of community among the Bhutanese refugees was born out of their shared experiences and their deep understanding of each other's predicament. I have captured this as the participants perceiving their struggles as a 'collectivistic' phenomenon – an observation that was also made by Goodman (2004). Other research with refugees has observed that social networks enable them to cope with their life challenges (Boateng, 2010; Dako-Gyeke & Adu, 2015). Most participants pointed out that it took leaving the refugee camp and being separated from this community to actually make them realize that their community was the reason they managed to cope with life in the camp and in many ways, their community actually made their life worth living. The Bhutanese played multiple roles in each other's lives – companions, saviours, guides, advisors, sounding boards and even a source of distraction. On a deeper level, it can be said that their community was the reason they managed to persevere in the face of their daunting circumstances.

When the participants spoke about their journey of leaving Nepal and the refugee camp forever, the sadness at being separated from their community becomes evident across all their narratives. This sadness goes beyond the generalised gloom over leaving a place because in the participants' sadness is also a sense of trepidation over being separated from the only place and community they knew since the time of their birth. Existing literature has indicated that being separated from familiar social networks can lead to negative affect among refugee children (Goldstein et al, 1997; Papageorgiou et al, 2000). Being led to a supposed *'new life'* of which they knew very

little made all the participants in the present study wonder if it was worth their families taking such a drastic step of resettlement because they didn't seem to be receiving all that they were promised and they also lost all their friends in Nepal.

The sadness in the participants' narratives can be witnessed even when they began living in Christchurch because they found themselves reduced to being in a strange place, separated from their loved ones and not knowing whom they could go to for help and advice on how to go about their lives in Christchurch. This sense of being isolated from a community was something all participants struggled with because it was a first time experience for them. Some participants indicated that even though they had neighbours where they lived, it was mostly their inability to communicate with them that got in the way of forming new relationships. When they compared this with life back in the refugee camp, this emphasised the feeling of isolation. This phenomenon has been corroborated by previous research among resettled refugee groups which have indicated that breaks in refugees' social networks negatively impacts their livelihoods and social cohesion particularly after resettlement because they find that they have no one to assist them (Simich et al, 2005; Kirmayer et al, 2011; Chueng & Phillimore, 2013; Dako-Gyeke & Adu, 2015).

The above paragraph serves to demonstrate how the absence of a community network or being separated from a community network is a sad and, for some, even a stressful experience. The youth who participated in my study referred to their community as their 'people' and their 'lifeline' and 'people who were always there to cheer you up'. Thus, having this support system taken away, for the first time in their lives, was experienced as a significant loss and in the context of my thesis can be interpreted as a loss of one of their prominent coping resources.

Subsequently after settling into their new lives in Christchurch many participants can be witnessed seeking out new friends. This was the method that worked for most of them while in the refugee camp and hence they reported resorting to it in Christchurch as well. The participants can be seen widening their friendship circles even with people not from their community and these friends helped make the resettlement, adjusting and coping with their new lives easier. Making new friends in Christchurch and creating new memories gave them new things to focus on and lessened their yearnings for their old friends. This finding supports the observation of

Lamba & Krahn (2003) that while disruption of social networks is a huge loss for refugees, they are also quite active in mobilizing new sources of social capital as they rebuild their lives in a new country.

As the participants recounted, in the aftermath of the major earthquakes, it was not so much the shaking of the ground and loss of their homes that had caused the Bhutanese community to grow desolate but rather the fact that they all felt stranded in a strange place and that there was no one who would come to their aid – particularly during the first earthquake of 2010. The earthquake served as an opportunity for the Bhutanese community in Christchurch to reconnect with the few other Bhutanese who were in Christchurch and they began living together, making sense of the earthquakes and then also planning their way out of it together. Once again, the sense of an 'unspoken connection' can be witnessed in the narratives of the participants. They could share their fear and anxiety about the earthquake with each other without actually re-hashing the events repeatedly because they all 'understood' each other and what they had been through. Being with their own people was the key factor that helped them cope with the aftereffects of the earthquakes.

While the theme that emerged from the narratives is one of coping with the support of the community, it should be acknowledged that coping appears to be a 'social construct'. According to Gergen (2009) social constructionism is the process by which people come to describe, explain or otherwise account for the world in which they live. While analysing the participants' narratives it seemed convenient to categorize their responses under the theme of 'coping' because it was consistent with my knowledge, yet as a researcher I realize that this is a construct that I placed within the interviews and subsequently within the analysis. The participants however did not use this word to construct their stories. Instead they described it as surviving, dealing with and making the most of their circumstances in the refugee camp and after being resettled in New Zealand. This provides some insight into how former refugee youth give meaning to their circumstances and also how meaning is 'constructed' differently by individuals.

“My parents made all the decisions”

- Madhuri

Given the previous description of participants’ decision-making especially regarding the mobilization of their resources in the aftermath of the earthquake it is interesting to note that during their life in the camps, and during resettlement, they did not have any opportunity to display a sense of agency. Years later as young adults in a new country they recalled making the best of their lives in the camp and finding something positive out of it but at that time they did what they could, because they perceived that they had no other choice. This pattern of not having a choice can possibly be attributed to the fact that they were all children at the time. This echoes postulations by McCabe (1995) that children have been historically viewed as their parents’ property and hence have no legal rights of their own. The prevailing spirit behind the parents having the final say in the children’s decisions is that they are the most motivated to act in the best interest of their child and more often than not have similar interests with their children (McCabe, 1995).

Cultural background and family structure also influence the children’s level of involvement in making decisions (Rolland et al 1988; McCabe, 1995). In a culture like the Bhutanese the children are generally not expected to take on family roles of providing and protecting others so they just go along with what their elders tell them to do. Most of the participants reported that they did not worry about providing for and protecting the family as their parents or older siblings saw to this. This lack of involvement in families’ decision-making has been observed by Crawley (2009) even among refugee children. Children of refugees are perceived as powerless, innocent and profoundly vulnerable and are thus perceived as incapable of contributing wisely to family decisions. Even when their opinions are considered, refugee children have reported feeling only ‘listened to’ and not ‘heard’ (Crawley, 2009).

This essence of non-involvement can be witnessed across the participants’ narratives even in their families’ decision to resettle in a foreign country. A sense of uneasiness can be witnessed among the participants when they narrated the process of them obtaining resettlement. This uneasiness mostly stemmed from their lack of involvement in the family’s decisions but in part can also be attributed to their knowledge of all the failed negotiations between the house of Bhutan, the United

Nations, the government of Nepal and other countries. The families of the participants had been made promises of citizenship and opportunities of leaving the refugee camp but more than 28 seemingly endless years passed before the United Nations was able to broker resettlement opportunities for the evicted Bhutanese. Thus when the process of resettlement was offered to the Bhutanese refugees it was met with suspicion, even though it appeared to be tangible. From the narratives presented within this research it seems reasonable to conclude that most participants experienced more trepidation and sadness rather than relief and elation over their resettlement.

Building on this pattern of not having a say in the important decisions leads to the observation of yet another essence in the narratives, having only 'child-like' concerns. No participant reported any financial worries or struggles to find the right documentation to apply for resettlement. Even when some of them spoke about their concerns over not having enough to eat or wondering where they would go if their houses were wrecked by natural elements it can be seen that their worries end with 'worrying'. Even though they were worried about these things none of them remembered going in search of a solution for them, they knew their parents (or other members from their community) would come to their rescue and either save them or tell them what to do. This may mean that the level of stress they experienced while living in the camp was slightly less than might have been reported by parents and others who played the role of providers for the family.

The great Canterbury earthquakes and aftershocks from 2010 to 2012 were a major event in the lives of all the participants. Most of the participants started speaking about the earthquake without even being asked about it; indicating the impact it has had on their lives. Upon a deeper engagement with the narratives it can be observed that this was the first 'crisis' in their lives where they could choose how they wanted to respond. Indeed, during the earthquakes all of them can be seen making their own decisions, be it checking on neighbours, running back to check on family or leaving the house altogether and going in search of help. While most participants lamented that they didn't know what to do when the earthquake hit none of them resigned themselves to their fate and stayed put, all of them were witnessed taking necessary action to try and find out what was happening and what they could do.

"Life is not that hard, you just have to give it a try"

-Saki

Another prominent essence that can be witnessed among the participants' narratives is them not giving up and continually trying to find a way around their circumstances – as is captured by the above quote from one of the narratives. No matter how hard their circumstances were or how scared they were about their predicaments, they always found a way through it. It is reasonable to conclude from the participants' narratives that they seem to have experienced life in the refugee camp as relentless with them always being deprived of resources and oppressed by the local inhabitants of Nepal. However, while they experienced the oppression the reader can also observe them displaying a remarkable sense of perseverance. This sense of perseverance can be witnessed particularly when the participants told their stories of going into the jungle bordering the camp. All of them were aware of the dangers associated with entering the jungle but somehow found a way to make the experience of gathering food from the jungle a pleasant experience, rather than accepting defeat and avoiding going to the jungle.

The challenge during this stage of the data analysis was to find an appropriate theory that would help conceptualize this capacity of the participants, of not giving up. At this stage I was influenced by the writings of Lindstrom (2000) and Pahud (2008) who presented this ability to continuously overcome adversities in daily life as resilience. Another aspect that supported the interpretation of resilience within my research was that the participants reported they always drew their motivation and support from their bond with their community. Previous research with refugees has found that community support during pre-migration periods is a strong factor that contributes to a person's resilience – primarily owing to the emotional support and encouragement received (Greeff & van der Merwe, 2004; Schweitzer et al, 2007). Thus, I chose to interpret this theme that emerged from the narratives as resilience.

When considering a person's resilience, the literature suggests that it is imperative to first consider the factors that would expose a person to the risk of developing a psychological disturbance and the factors that would protect or buffer them from it (e.g. Murray, 2003; Martinez-Torteya, 2009). All the participants reported growing up in an unprivileged society where food, resources and opportunities were

either scant or non-existent. Additionally, the participants recalled how their families made the decision to leave the camp which may have been for their benefit but was a difficult decision nonetheless because of the cost at which it came. All these aspects count as factors that would ordinarily expose a person to the risk of developing a stress related disorder (Martinez-Torteya, 2009). However, the presence of their family and community resources gave participants enough protective factors to buffer them from developing such disorders. All participants reported that their solid relationship with their families and the deep connection with their extended community helped them deal with not only the difficulties of their lives in the camp but also the devastation that they faced after the Great Canterbury Earthquakes.

The participants recalled that when terrible events like the earthquakes made them suffer they experienced a state of existential confusion and sadness for a while but even through these circumstances they managed to find something positive to focus on and get through. Most of the participants recalled that in the aftermath of both the earthquakes they went and lived with other resettled community members or inversely had community members come and live in their houses. This reminded them of their 'happy days' back in the refugee camp when they were surrounded by many people and had lots of people to share their worries with. It would appear that the Bhutanese community reconnecting is what helped them 'bounce back' after the event rather allowing it to break them.

Another indication of their resilience is described in the participants' narratives that they learned early in life that challenging circumstances would always be there and it is their task to find a way around it and not give up on life. One participant, Drishya illustrated this in his narrative while talking about his childhood, "One thing you learn in the camp is that life is tough. But you also learn to push through and that there are people to help you". It can be inferred that part of the youths' resilience developed through what Brough et al (2003) refer to as an 'inner strength' to persevere in the face of their difficulties. The participants' reference to their inner strength as the means of coping with their circumstances can be witnessed multiple times throughout their narratives hence it is discussed in the following section as another essence of their lived experiences.

“I guess I’m just a strong person”

- Madhuri

Through all of the reported hardships and struggles and the constant engagement with the unknown it can also be observed from the participants’ descriptions that they still managed to draw on either their internal or external resources to find a way to cope with their situations. While they still experienced the unpleasant emotions that resulted from their resettlement and the damage caused by the earthquakes, they acknowledged that they have not been devastated by the events in their lives but instead, have reported a sense of trust in themselves to be able to even make it through another major earthquake if it were to occur again. Some researchers conceptualize this concept of faith in one’s capacities as another facet of resilience and hence refer to it as ‘personal resilience’ (e.g. Jackson et al, 2007). Other researchers have termed this capacity as ‘personal strength’ (e.g. Lindsey et al, 2000). Regardless of how it is conceptualized, this capacity emerged as another prominent essence among the participants’ narratives.

Throughout their narratives, participants use terms such as ‘it was best just to move on’, ‘somehow I found courage to persevere and trust myself’ and ‘maybe I’m just a strong person’. That demonstrates how they began to acknowledge and appreciate their personal resources and also how they were able to draw on these resources during stressful circumstances. In retrospect, the participants noted that it was their ‘inner strength’ that helped them cope when they lived in the camps, during their resettlement and during the earthquakes.

The descriptions of the participants in my research are similar to findings reported by Lindsey et al (2000) and Kurtz et al (2000) who found that young people are grateful for the help they receive from others but at the same time are able to identify internal factors that were significant in achieving some success in their lives. According to Lindsey et al (2000) young people who have been through difficult circumstances are able to learn valuable lessons from these experiences and as a result they come to understand and value themselves better and this helps them successfully cope with their difficulties. Another interesting observation among these participants is their recollections of life in the camp as them having no agency in the decisions, yet as adults they acknowledge that they have the resources within them to make decisions when

required. This could be attributed to the fact that they are no longer children or *more importantly) it can be attributed to them learning to trust themselves.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings from the participants' narratives. All the findings have been presented chronologically and with a phenomenological focus. The chapter has been divided into four parts and each part encapsulates a major event in the lives of the young Bhutanese former refugees. The first part presents the lived experiences of the participants while in the refugee camp. The second part presents their journey of resettlement while the third part presents their lived struggles while trying to integrate themselves into New Zealand life. The fourth part presents accounts of the Great Canterbury Earthquakes from the perspectives of the participants. The earthquakes were a major event for the Bhutanese because they occurred within the two years of them living in New Zealand and they had no information on what earthquakes were and how they were to respond to one. In keeping with the phenomenological approach the findings present the textural (what was experienced) and structural (how it was experienced) descriptions of the participants' narratives.

The last part of the chapter presents my attempt at capturing the essence of the participants' narratives and providing insights into the lives and coping strategies of the Bhutanese former refugees. While the previous sections present the accounts of the participants and their descriptions of their life events, the final section presents some insights into their narratives from the perspective of the researcher.

Chapter Six

The Clients' Experiences with Mindfulness Infused Counselling

"Leaving the camp was not a relief. Relief is right here… talking to you"

- *Client*

Overview

In the previous chapter, the reader and researcher witness the unprivileged and relentlessly severe lives that these Bhutanese youth were born into. Moreover, the reader can also witness their sadness at having to leave their friends in the camp and their sense of trepidation as they set out from the camps to begin 'new lives'. As a counsellor, I trust the process of telling one's stories and experiencing the emotions that they bring up as a step towards optimizing the quality of one's life. This motivated me to utilize my skills and offer counselling sessions to the participants. As can be witnessed later in this chapter this research was the first opportunity for most participants to tell the stories of resettlement and life in the camp from their perspective.

In this chapter I present the data of the mindfulness- infused counselling sessions that were offered to the participants. As set out elsewhere in this thesis the sessions offered by me fall under the category of what Brown *et al.* (2012) refer to as a Mindfulness Based Intervention (MBI). In this chapter, all participants will be referred to as 'clients' owing to the nature of the counselling relationship. The word client also replaces the use of their pseudonyms so as to provide them a deeper level of confidentiality. Many personal experiences were discussed during the follow-up interviews and it is my perception that using their pseudonyms increases the clients' chance of being identified.

As set out in the methods chapter, I undertook the roles of both researcher and counsellor so within this chapter I am attempting to denote when one role takes precedence over the other. The first section presents some of my professional reflections on the counselling process. It should be reiterated that these reflections are

not a documentation of the counselling sessions but rather serve to give the reader a glimpse of the nature of the sessions and the counsellor's experience of them. This is in accordance with my research goal to understand the influence that mindfulness-infused counselling may have on the participants' coping, and not to evaluate the therapeutic process. The section containing my reflections is presented briefly and every effort has been made not to identify the clients.

The second part of this chapter presents the findings of the interviews conducted after the counselling sessions. As mentioned in the methods section, of the eight youths who originally volunteered to be a part of this research two had to drop out for personal reasons after the first interview hence this section presents data obtained from six participants only. The aim of the follow up interview was to explore the clients' views about any impacts of the mindfulness infused counselling sessions on the clients' methods of coping. The intention of this was to explore the usefulness of this MBI in facilitating clients' coping processes. The interview however was unstructured, the participants also spoke about their curiosity about counselling, and how they construed the process prior to attending compared with after they experienced the sessions. These descriptions have been presented in this chapter to honour the clients' voices and also because they add to each client's lived interpretation of mindfulness and counselling.

Reflections on the counselling sessions

As detailed in the methodology chapter the sessions that were offered to the Bhutanese youths as part of this thesis were person-centred and each participant was offered up to five sessions each lasting around 60 minutes. My role was not to indicate what the clients had to talk about during their sessions or give them advice over what to do in their lives. Rather my role was to provide the clients a comfortable space to talk about anything that they wanted to and support them as they talked through their life events or displayed any emotion. This is in keeping with the humanistic perspective on counselling which has been reported by some clients to have positive effects when they are talking about their lives (Lillie, 2002; Marchant & Payne, 2002; Stephen et al, 2011).

The content of the sessions revolved mostly around their years spent living in the refugee camp in Nepal. All clients began by speaking about their lives at the present but gradually there was a shift in content and all clients began relating their experiences to their early lives in the camps. It should be noted that the content the clients brought to the counselling sessions was treated differently than the content discussed in the interviews. During the counselling sessions the clients were encouraged to express the emotional aspects of their stories, which was not done in the interviews. I had also explained to the clients the difference between talking during the interviews and counselling, orally and in written form (refer to Appendix). While they all lived in the same camp, not all of them had the same stories to tell. For some clients the biggest area of emotional turmoil was the uncertainty that came with living in the camp - they did not know if they would be alive at the end of the day and which family members would survive with them. For some the turmoil was over having to deal with meagre resources and then having to deal with the guilt of seeing their parents sacrificing so that the children would have enough.

Leaving Nepal was also a major event in all of the clients' lives. One of the clients burst into tears while recounting their journey from the camp to the airport located in the capital city of Nepal. She recounted that these were tears that she had to hold back then because being the eldest daughter of the family she had to take care of the younger siblings and also encourage the mother to keep moving. For another client the session served as her first space where she could verbalize and try to make sense of the events of the day she left the camp. She used her session to process the shock and sadness of being told that she had to leave her home, school and country.

The overriding emotion that was presented multiple times during the sessions for all participants was grief. Researchers have observed that this emotion is commonly presented among refugee clients owing to the multiple losses they have faced (Mercer & Evans, 2006; McLellan, 2015). Boehnlein (1987) postulated that refugees who have experienced multiple losses not only experience chronic grief but also often pass this on to their children. While this finding cannot be confirmed in this thesis due to the clients' parents not being involved, it is something to consider while interpreting their grief. Grief for my clients came in many forms; some showed their grief with tears while others displayed their grief by opening up and expressing sadness as they talked about a past experience for the first time. Two other prominent emotions that were

presented in the sessions were anger and frustration, Evans and Payne (2008) have noted that these two emotions are commonly expressed in the counselling sessions of young people in New Zealand. All the clients were children when they lived in the camps and hence recalled being powerless to fight off the bullies and the others who did wrong to them. Even now, as young adults they still feel anger towards those who tried to cause them harm, particularly the local people of that area. The frustration that they felt stemmed mostly from the fact that they were dependent on others to protect them.

According to Gibson and Cartwright (2013), young clients often present the feeling of powerlessness during their counselling sessions. Additionally, the literature has consistently documented that former refugees frequently report feeling powerless, helpless, and unable to exert any control over their lives in their counselling sessions and even outside sessions (Tseng et al, 1993; Lie, 2002; Rousseau et al, 2004; Yakushko et al, 2008), hence the current findings are not surprising. The reports of my clients are also congruent with a description by Finkelhor and Browne (1985) who noted that, particularly with children, a basic kind of powerlessness occurs when the child feels that his/her territory has been repeatedly invaded against his/her will and this sense of powerless is exacerbated by the coercions and manipulations that might also take place during this time. Thus, it can be observed that while the content of each client's counselling session was unique, there were some common themes like grief, anger, powerlessness and frustration that emerged.

All five counselling sessions began and ended with a guided exercise in mindfulness (Refer to Appendix for an example of the guided exercise). The goal of the exercise at the beginning was to centre the client's attention so that they could gather their thoughts on what they wanted to speak about for the session. At the end of the sessions, the mindfulness exercise was intended to bring the client's attention out of what they had been talking about and back into the present moment. As mentioned in an earlier chapter this is done so that clients leave the session feeling fully in control of their emotions. During the first session, I shared some mindfulness theory with the clients and also explained how others found it useful. This was done orally and in written form through the use of information sheets (refer to Appendix). One client reported feeling grateful for the time spent being mindful because it was a respite from her long and busy day. Another client reported that the mindfulness exercises for her

were like hitting a pause button in her life and taking a break before going into the next thing; she reported enjoying the quiet time where she was encouraged to focus on herself. Another client admitted that the exercises were a little arduous in the beginning and he kept being distracted initially but then learned to quieten his mind as the sessions progressed. In general, most clients reported feeling tranquil and calm immediately after the exercises. A number of researchers have found similar results (the calming effects of mindfulness) when investigating the efficacy of Mindfulness Based Interventions with youth (Huppert & Johnson, 2010; Monshat et al, 2012; Milligan et al, 2013; Saltzman, 2015).

All the clients returned for their follow-up sessions and made full use of the five mindfulness infused counselling sessions that were offered to them. All clients also filled up the 60 minutes of each session with some admitting that the content they discussed were things they had never discussed with anyone else in the past. One factor that facilitated interest in the process was that the clients were not being recorded and hence they felt a sense of freedom to talk about anything and even sit in any position that they felt comfortable in and could talk more. One of the clients commented that she was a bit tense during the research interviews because she felt like an actress who was being interviewed for a television show; she also felt a pressure to get the right answers and be presentable. She later reported that she was much more comfortable during the counselling sessions as she did not feel any pressure to perform, was comfortable knowing that anything she said would be accepted and remain between her and the counsellor. The implications of this phenomenon are discussed in the subsequent chapter. The second factor that potentially helped facilitate the counselling sessions was that the direction of the sessions was determined by the clients. The clients were not given any particular topic to talk about and were told that they could start wherever they liked. This gave them a sense of self-direction and made them acknowledge that they were in-charge of the sessions. It was only on one or two occasions that the counsellor had to encourage a client by initiating the talking.

During the last session the counsellor reflected back to the clients some of the content that they had discussed in their sessions which was done as a way of attempting to summarise all that was discussed and also to validate the clients' stories. The clients were also reminded that if they wanted to continue with their sessions or wanted a few more sessions in the future they were more than welcome to request these from the

counsellor. They were also informed that any session above the fifth one would not be reported as part of this research. The clients all expressed their gratitude for this but none at any stage indicated that they wanted any more sessions.

There were only a few [if any] references made to the earthquakes. One client remarked during a session that even though the earthquakes were a big event and a huge disaster since their families went through great difficulty on account of it, in hindsight it was not as great an event in their lives as living in the camps in Nepal and making it out of there alive. Most clients in this research reported more distress from being born into the refugee camps and resettling in New Zealand than from experiencing a series of major earthquakes and aftershocks in a new country. Another client remarked that being born into the camp life and having to struggle in the early years of their lives has prepared them for any difficulty that may arise in their life.

In general, it seems possible to deduce from the sessions that the Bhutanese youth who participated in the mindfulness-infused counselling sessions all responded positively to it.

The clients' experiences of mindfulness infused counselling

The following section reports the data from the follow-up interviews, which were conducted approximately four to five weeks after the participants had completed their final counselling session. For all six clients these sessions were their first experience of attending counselling. All six individually iterated that counselling does not exist within their culture because mental health issues are either frowned upon or treated the same as any physical ailment within their society. People in Nepal experiencing mental health issues are either admitted to a hospital or taken to speak with a priest so professional counsellors are relatively invisible within that society. The clients recalled going to their friends whenever they were upset or troubled about something and hence never had experiences of going to the priest or a doctor. All the clients reported agreeing to come to counselling in this instance for two reasons – curiosity and not being able to be identified by their community people. As one client described -

"Back in my country if people found out that I am going for counselling they would think that I have some illness or that I am in some kind of trouble. But it's different out here [in Christchurch] here our people are not that many and the rest don't really know where I am going. It's my decision, I decided to come and see for myself what you do."

Another commonality among the clients' descriptions was what they perceived their counselling sessions were going to be like. Most clients thought that they were going to be attending a series of interviews like the type they saw on TV – with a microphone and notepad. These participants also believed that they would only be asked a fixed pattern of questions with certain answers expected. Two participants actually believed that they were coming into some 'hard-core' clinical set-up and that they would be made to either sob excessively or be given a list of things they need to do to improve their lives (impressions they admit to forming from popular media). The clients reported being surprised (and some were even delighted) to find that the sessions were very different from what they had thought they would be and some of their expressions are presented below –

"It really wasn't professional talking; it was more of a friendly conversation with a normal person. It didn't feel like you were digging into my life but somehow you just got me talking."

"It was different because I thought it would be very strict kind of but when I came here I found out that I could explain it however I wanted to, even joke around. It was not like I had to do this this, and this, you know? I could just be myself"

"Every time I came in it was all so different and many times I felt like I am getting my childhood back"

In order to provide more detail about how clients experienced the process of the mindfulness infused counselling process, I now present some individual descriptions in which clients describe how they felt about the process and, in some cases, how the process has influenced them.

Client 1

Client one reported that his favourite takeaway from the sessions was the knowledge that mindfulness was an art that could be practiced anywhere and at any time. While he acknowledged that, he does not practice any form of meditation on a daily basis, he sometimes finds opportunities to practice the mindfulness that he learned during the sessions. An example he recalled was a day when he went trekking on sunny day to a forest. This client says trekking is a favourite hobby and that he goes on many treks every year but this one in particular was a bit different compared to all the other ones he had been on –

"I was in this native forest and all of a sudden I wanted to be mindful and so I tried to deeply listen to everything around me including my breathing and my heartbeat, yeah everything and I didn't talk to anyone. I was feeling like – happy you know? After being mindful I found myself appreciating the forest more. You know you sort of have this blank space in your mind. So that was a really good day."

What the client has described above is a sense of deep connection with nature and also a sense of gratitude towards the forest – which he said were first time experiences for him. On that day, the client also recalled choosing not to speak with any of his companions but rather just give his attention to the forest. In the mindfulness exercises in the sessions the clients are encouraged to give attention to their surroundings and notice what is there by using only auditory sensations. This client recalled using this skill on the day in the forest and as a result recalled enjoying the sound of the river flowing and the chirping of the birds. It should also be pointed out that this client reported always enjoying trekking but on that day, mindfulness enhanced his enjoyment of it by adding more depth to the experience. Through the client's description of his experience of mindfulness, it can be deduced that he achieved a state of deep 'connectedness' with nature (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). This client's report of being more aware of his natural surroundings, experiencing positive emotions while trekking and developing a deep sense of appreciation of nature have been observed by previous mindfulness researchers (Howell et al, 2011; White, 2011; Wolsko & Lindberg, 2013).

Another benefit that this client reported having obtained from attending the mindfulness infused counselling sessions was that he felt able to let go of his emotional

baggage. He reported that after attending the sessions he found that he was no longer dwelling on the things that went wrong in his past. According to him, talking about those issues with a counsellor made him accept them rather than agonize about them and wishing that he had acted differently. He felt that accepting his past circumstances has led to him 'getting over' them much more easily than before.

"Now after I have done the mindfulness and had a few talks with you I have learned about letting things go. I have realized now that holding on to the bad stuff really doesn't help and maybe I could have let go two or three years ago but it has happened for me so now [the present] and is so much better. Maybe without this [the sessions], nothing would have changed but this is how I feel."

This client reported that at the time of coming to the follow up interview he had not experienced any drastic life circumstances so did not have the opportunity to know if mindfulness and/or counselling changed the way he coped with his difficulties. This client also expressed his regret over not having had the chance to go to counselling after the major earthquakes. He recalled that it took a long time for him to work his way past the challenges of the earthquakes and he wondered if others had had the opportunity to talk with a counsellor at that time they could have been 'back on their feet' a bit sooner.

Client 2

This client reported getting substantial relief from practicing mindfulness. Ever since learning techniques of calming down and focussing her thoughts within the sessions she recalled that she was less distressed by her problems and this in turn has led her to find solutions much quicker than before. She admitted that she was very sceptical of the process in the beginning but once she started practicing mindfulness on her own outside the sessions she came to recognize its positive impacts. This client said that every time she does a mindfulness exercise on her own it is like creating her own 'private space' where things do not seem to bother as much.

"It's like when you are in it you are just relaxed and you don't think of anything and you are totally calm and then you find that what used to bother you doesn't bother you like it used to."

This client also reported that after attending the sessions she has found that the way she dealt with her problems has changed substantially. Earlier she would be glossing over her problems with a flippant attitude. However, after counselling she reported seeking a more 'hands on' way of dealing with her problems and often chooses to confront her problems rather than ignore them. One incident that she choose to share at this time was one where a close friend just abruptly stopped talking to her and this caused her a lot of stress because according to her this one friend is a 'soul-mate'. She tried ignoring it for a while hoping that things would ease out between her and her friend after a few days – but to no avail. At that time she practiced a little mindful exercise and as she described the outcome as, "In that moment, in the quiet I got the answer I was looking for. I knew I had to go and talk to her to find out what's wrong." The client reported making the decision to talk to her friend and after that was able to smooth things out, and now they are back to being friends. She also recalled using mindfulness for many of her other minor challenges and has found that it has helped her reach the solution she needs.

Through the client's above description, it can be observed that she displayed the mindful emergent process of 'inherent wisdom' (Segal et al, 2002). The client described her problem with her friend which led her to practice a mindful exercise in which she tried to calm herself. This enabled her to experience the emergence of a solution to her problem. In mindfulness theory, this emergence of a possible solution is termed inherent wisdom (Brown & Ryan, 2003). This client also described how, after the mindfulness infused counselling, she was able to understand her situation more holistically. This is consistent with what Zerubavel and Messman-Moore, (2013) claim emerges from using mindfulness. So, in this case a shift occurred when this client recalled replacing her difficulty of moulding herself into the New Zealand culture and clinging on to her old culture with a more balanced view. She noted that, after talking some of these issues through in counselling and practicing mindfulness on her own, she has come to realise that it is possible to still cherish the culture of her birth and at the same time find a sense of pride in the new place that she and her family have moved to. Rather than viewing herself as only Nepali or Bhutanese or a Kiwi, this client has described that she is now comfortable knowing that she has aspects of all three cultures in her personality.

"I used to think that my past was my everything – it was all that I took pride in. But now I realise that you sometimes go towards different things and that you can make your own pride wherever you are. I used to always consider myself Nepali because I don't like Bhutanese [laughs] but now I realise that our life [referring to her parents] in Bhutan taught us a lot and brought us to where we are right now"

After attending the sessions the client also reported no longer being sceptical of the process and has developed a fair amount of trust in what counselling is. In the beginning she found it difficult explaining to others where she was going and what she was engaging in but now that she has experienced counselling she was eager to share what she has learned and hopes that eventually her community in Christchurch will come to understand what counselling really is, and will stop resisting it so much.

"Counselling is your own time where you talk about 'you' in general; it's not like someone helping you or anything it's just like you helping yourself by talking to someone. I really want to tell others about it and hopefully then they might want to experience it and then we might finally be able to help them. They will only change when they learn more about it [counselling]"

Client 3

This client reported that her experience with mindfulness-infused counselling has helped her realise that she needs to address her fear of anger by making quiet time for herself. She recalled (in the follow-up interview) that she was always very scared of her anger after one of her relatives dropped dead after an outburst of anger. This led her to fear that something is going to happen to her after she is angry. This is compounded by the fact that she loses her temper easily and when she does, she experiences a flush of emotion, which is often accompanied by a headache.

The client reported that she practiced mindfulness exercises even after the sessions ended and has found that they helped her get a grip on herself whenever she felt angry. She reported that she found herself making some quiet time for herself. She noted that, especially at her work place, where she gets angry about 'the way people behave', she now looks for an opportunity to find a place where she can meditate and

stay calm. She described this in an example of an incident where she was angry with the actions of someone at work but, because of her mindfulness training, changed her usual reaction when respecting that a close relation of his had recently passed away. She describes her reaction to this person as –

"Usually I would go and just scold this person badly but on this day I did not, I just went in the staff room for few minutes and calm myself down, yeah actually I did some meditation and I realise that being angry is not correct because this man is in pain so I just left all my anger and I went out there and just stayed near this man till all the work was finished and while he talked and cried. It's very difficult for me to do this because when I am angry usually I cannot be nice to the same person but on this day I managed to do it."

She acknowledged that her work situations very often require her to display emotions contrary to what she is feeling and that is very difficult for her, but practicing mindfulness has helped her achieve that. Through this client's description, it can be observed that she has found a way to regulate her emotions when engaging with experiences that she finds distressing – particularly at her work place. It appears, therefore, that she has demonstrated the claim that people are able to regulate their emotions through mindfulness (Khong, 2011; Parent et al, 2016; McDonald et al, 2016).

This client has additionally reported developing new insights about her life in Nepal after attending the mindfulness and counselling sessions. She recounts that earlier she only wanted to remember the good parts of her life and tried very hard to forget all that was unpleasant, but now she says that she accepts that both the pleasant and unpleasant experiences are part of her life. In particular, the client recalled changing her thinking about the people who tormented the refugees and the political leaders at whose hands the refugees suffered. The client particularly harboured a lot of anger towards those people who betrayed her community and joined the tormentors. She reported that after coming to counselling and learning mindfulness she is gradually finding ways to forgive those people. She acknowledges that everyone's life back in the camp was very tough and people somehow had to find a way to survive. People did whatever they could to feed themselves and make it out alive and for some that even included turning traitor. This description is in keeping with the intent of mindfulness exercises to help people view the events of their past in dialectical terms.

What she described (as presented above) is a 'reconciliation' of some of the unpleasant aspects of her life with her whole life, as opposed to considering them as mutually exclusive events. Rather than clinging only to the good memories or succumbing to a sense of helplessness, this client remembered the good things about her life in Nepal and at the same time acknowledged their torment and betrayal by some community members as aspects of her life that she is unable to change (Zerubavel & Messman-Moore, 2015). Some authors like (Hayes et al, 2004) have referred to this ability as 'psychological flexibility'.

Client 4

When this client was talking about his experience of mindfulness and counselling he said –

"Well I don't usually talk about my past life and stuff with my friends but because I was in counselling I did! And that was the main highlight for me. And I probably would not have practiced mindfulness at home or with my friends but now I have learned about it and I can use it when I need to I guess."

This client reported being pleasantly surprised at how much he was able to talk about the details of his personal life with a 'complete stranger' and at the time of this interview also said that he doesn't regret it. The mindfulness exercises had a considerable influence on this client. According to him, he made peace with the events that occurred in his past – particularly those that happened in the refugee camp. He also realized that these experiences were an integral part of his journey because without them he would not be where he is today. After learning mindfulness the client has also learned to appreciate the present rather than stressing out over it or getting anxious of events that are yet to take place.

The client reported feeling the impact of the sessions when he was asked to accompany a family member overseas. The family member was not very well-versed with travelling and could not speak English well so the client was particularly anxious over what they would do while they were travelling and in the event that any officials along the way questioned them. In addition, the client recalled that he was going to be

'the adult' for the journey; it was up to him to make the decisions and get them safely to their destination and back. He recalled being very anxious about this whole prospect of travelling alone with a dependent and at one point after arriving at the airport decided that he had nothing to lose by practicing a little mindfulness meditation. So he went ahead and at the end of it reported feeling calm and realizing that things might go wrong or they might have some trouble along the way but what was important was that 'it hadn't happened yet'. So rather than worrying over a problem that might happen, the client decided to enjoy the time they had. As a result, he found that he was able to spend quality time with his relative, they had many deep conversations along their journey and in the end, they made it overseas and back to New Zealand without any trouble along the way. An important factor for this client apart from managing to stay calm during his journey was that he found himself being more connected with his environment and his relative after being mindful. He recounted that if he had not tried being mindful he would have ended up stressing over the trip the entire time and not enjoying any of it.

The client reported that practicing mindfulness also made him more appreciative of the good things in his life when he and his family lived in the camp. He acknowledged the struggles that he and his community had to go through on a daily basis but at the same time noted that he has developed a sense of appreciation for the few things that were good in their lives at that time – things we says were unique only to that period in his life.

"I mean now I realise that at that time we didn't have too many resources but our lives were happy and we made the most of it but now we have too many resources but where is the happiness? I mean here we don't have the time to do anything at all for the whole day and people go in the background like our friends. Back there we just went to the ground and we had like a 100 friends whom we could play with at any time."

He reported that, learning to be fully aware of the present has changed his outlook towards life because it has given him the motivation to give his best to every situation in his life. He also said that being mindful has enabled him to realise that not every situation in his life has a problem attached to it and thus not everything is worth worrying about. The underlying essence in this client's follow-up interview is a sense of 'acceptance' of his past and present life. Acceptance is metacognition (the ability to

remove cognitive filters from thought processes) of mindfulness where the individual accepts his/her life situations and past experiences and then uses this acceptance to promote change (Robins, 2003; Orsillo et al, 2010; Segal et al, 2012). For this client, accepting his past experiences gave him a fresh perspective on the events happening in his life and also helped him appreciate his current circumstances. Through his attitude of acceptance the client can also be witnessed developing a sense of appreciation for his life spent in the refugee camp. According to Khong (2011) this capacity of deep appreciation can only be achieved during mindful moments because these moments help us grasp the wider meaning of our experiences.

Client 5

This client reported that the most favourable outcome for her after the attending the mindfulness-infused counselling sessions was that she is better able to process her feelings and thus can put them into words better. She noted that whereas she used to struggle with talking to others because she was not sure how her words would come out and if the other person would understand or not, she now feels more able to talk. She recalled that coming into counselling gave her the opportunity for the first time to say what she was feeling and not be afraid of being judged. The first factor that facilitated this was that she was talking to a stranger who didn't know her or any of her family members so she wasn't concerned that about them hearing what she had to say. Secondly, as the sessions progressed she came to appreciate the confidential nature of the sessions and felt safe that nothing she said there would be repeated to anyone else. According to her, being more confident of expressing her feelings is beginning to change the nature of her relationships with people and has given her motivation to start opening up to people.

"Counselling has really helped me to open up about me and it has given me confidence in talking. That definitely makes me feel good because I don't feel as lonely as I used to. I used to feel very lonely but coming to counselling has made me realize that I need to step out a bit."

This client's account of being able to verbalize her thoughts and gaining the confidence to talk to others because she felt 'safe' to discuss these issues within the

counselling room resonates with other's views that safety is of primary importance with young clients (Freake et al, 2007). Westergaad (2013) also observed that it is important that young people who come to counselling, feel respected rather than patronized and one of the ways this is achieved is by validating whatever the clients talk about. With this client, my non-judgemental and unconditional approach towards her feelings of shyness encouraged her to find her way through the shyness.

Apart from being able to talk more openly to her friends this client also recognized that she has more courage to have discussions with her parents. Since coming to counselling she reports being more capable of discussing her ideas for her life with her parents and, to her surprise, she has found that that they were very open to listening to her and her fear of getting rejected was only 'in her head'. The client also reported other favourable outcomes after practicing mindfulness. She is (by her own admission) very shy and prone to panicking when something goes wrong. Since learning mindfulness, she has been practicing it regularly to keep her anxiety and panic in check. She is not afraid of these emotions and understands that sometimes they actually help her get her work done and she has found that mindfulness meditation helps her control these emotions. It appears that the client's description can be interpreted with Khong's (2011) theory of accepting emotions and understanding what they are trying to teach us.

Another benefit that this client reported from practicing mindfulness in the sessions was that she could process her life in the refugee camp with a fresh perspective. Moreover, this new perspective has helped her reach a level of forgiveness for those who tormented and bullied her community.

"I realized that all the horrible things that people have done to you and you always have this part in you that hate them and wants revenge for all that they did to you because we didn't do anything to them and they still hurt us. But after practicing mindfulness I kind of acknowledged that it is part of life and that is the past but you still have your future and you have to let it go to be able to move to the next step."

This client also expressed a need to 'process' all that has happened and not just merely forget about it or act like it never happened. The client acknowledged that many of the emotions attached to her life in the refugee camp are unpleasant and choosing to think about them could potentially mean having to re-experience all or some of those

emotions. However, she reported, "I don't mind thinking or talking about that [the refugee camps] now because another thing I have learned in counselling is that it is ok to not be ok sometimes." This client has described herself as being more open about her emotions, appreciating the events in her past more and performing better at roles involving socializing and talking to others – changes that she perceives in herself since attending the mindfulness infused counselling. These changes are indicative that a client has found counselling to be a transforming experience (Gibson & Cartwright, 2014).

Client 6

This client did not report noticing any major changes in his personality after the mindfulness and counselling sessions, however, he did report a small change in his level of self-awareness. The client reported that his biggest issue was speaking to strangers whether in public or at home. He recalled always breaking out into a cold sweat and stammering when he had to talk to or in front of strangers. Even when he first came to the interviews and counselling sessions for this research the client was reasonably nervous but then as he became more comfortable talking to me his nervousness and uneasiness reduced. The client reported that the mindfulness practice has not helped him reduce his level of nervousness but rather has made him more aware of it and made him aware that he may have **choices** to avoid incidents if he is going to have nervous spell.

He narrated an example of making a choice to find an alternative to exposing himself to a situation that would bring on nervousness. When asked to make a presentation at school that he knew would bring on stammering, he wrote to the teacher asking for permission to be excused from the presentation and submit a written report instead. He describes his relief as –

"Even though the mindfulness has not fixed you know… Me being nervous and things, at least now I know which places I must avoid if I going to. Like earlier I really wasn't aware and so often I would just go there and get caught you know? Like made to talk in front of others and things... And then you they would all just laugh [in school] but at least now I know that I have to ask for help from my teachers and stuff"

The client reported that owing to his cultural background going in to see a professional counsellor didn't ever come 'naturally' to him but now that he has witnessed the experience he feels that the way counselling is frowned upon in his community is excessive. He admits that when I invited him to the sessions he thought it was going to be an interview for a newspaper or a book and all he would have to do is sit and answer a few questions and so decided to just come along and see what was going to happen. However, at the end he described his experience as –

"It was different because you made me think a lot about my life and my family and we spoke for a long time about a lot of things. And yeah I don't remember you saying much but I was telling you lots of stuff and a lot of it I haven't discussed even with my close friends but yeah I just told you all those things. It was definitely different."

The client also reported that he found the mindfulness and breathing exercises very beneficial because after doing them he felt calmer and was better able to focus without getting nervous. During the follow-up interview, he observed that he did most of the talking during the sessions and said that this was possibly because he felt calm. He also recalled two other factors during the sessions that made it easier for him to talk and reduce his nervousness. The first was that the sessions were not being recorded and so he did not feel pressured to give any particular responses and he did not mind making any mistakes while talking because 'only I would hear what he said'. The second factor that helped him open up was that I was a complete stranger who knew nothing about him or his background and he felt that because I did not know him I was more interested in listening to all that he talked about.

This client's description of his experience with counselling indicates a change in his ability to perceive situations, which would cause him stress. An increased awareness of stress-causing situations, has been attributed, by previous researchers to be an outcome of mindfulness (Salmon et al, 2004; Ciesla et al, 2012). It should also be noted that this change reported by the client is modest and circumscribed. The client did not come to counselling with any particular issue but rather noticed one, his nervousness, as the sessions progressed. While the client did report a perceived positive outcome, his description indicates that it was only this one particular need that was influenced by the mindfulness infused-counselling. This client 'found out' what he had to do to work around his nervousness after attending the sessions. According to Gibson

and Cartwright (2014) this could be considered as a 'pragmatic' benefit of attending the sessions but in the case of this client it needs to be treated with scepticism as it was not determined if there were any other factors that contributed to his heightened awareness of his nervousness.

Examination of the Client's responses

The following section presents my attempt to critically examine the clients' descriptions of their experiences with mindfulness-infused counselling. As the counsellor, I feel satisfaction that I have facilitated sessions having positive impacts on the lives of these clients. But as the researcher and writer of this thesis it is also my endeavour to present the findings in an objective and fairly critical manner.

The counselling that was offered as part of this research was driven by the humanistic approach yet it was mindfully infused. While the two processes (mindfulness and counselling) were not offered independently of each other, some clients have shown a favourable attitude towards either one of the processes. The clients had not heard of mindfulness but after they began practicing it, several felt that it was very similar to their religious meditative practices, hence in the narratives it can be witnessed that some clients have referred to it as 'meditation' rather than mindfulness.

At the follow-up interview, most of the clients reported feeling good about the way they were able to open up to a stranger in counselling and some even reported that it was a first time experience for them to describe in detail and reflect on an event that had happened in their past. This phenomenon can be explained by what Howe (2004) referred to as the clients 'feeling secure' in the counselling environment. According to Howe if clients feel that they are being accepted then they in turn accept the counsellor and gradually begin to explore themselves and all the 'unsavoury' aspects of their lives (Howe, 2004). Researchers who have examined the responses of young clients to counselling (Freake et al, 2007; Green, 2010, Westergaard, 2013) have reported similar findings. These researchers concluded that young clients need a 'safe space' where they are not judged but treated with respect. The humanistic approach facilitates such an environment in counselling when the counsellor adheres to the practice of

demonstrating unconditional positive regard and empathy, regardless of the age of the client. The client's sense of security within their sessions throughout this research can be attributed to the principles of person-centred counselling that were followed.

The majority of the clients described how the mindfulness infused counselling has altered the way in which they perceive the events in their past, particularly their time spent in the refugee camp. The clients reported feeling anger, frustration and helplessness at all the events that took place in the camp, before they came to counselling. However, a common theme emerging across most of the descriptions, after counselling, was a sense of 'acceptance' of their past circumstances. Acceptance, which is a key metacognition of mindfulness (Zerubavel & Messman-Moore, 2013) is believed to occur through the practice of mindfulness because it encourages the clients to bring a 'different mind' or a different quality of gentle attention to their memories. This process then encourages the individual to view and acknowledge their past as part of their whole life story (Segal et al, 2012). This explanation of acceptance provides some understanding of how my clients changed their perception of their past events. Most of the clients who participated in this research have reported that, as a result of engaging in mindfulness, they now accept and in some ways even appreciate their lives in the refugee camp and the skills they learned and memories they made while they lived there.

Some of the clients also described being able to 'let go' of all the wrong done to them in the refugee camp and now being able to forgive those who bullied and tormented them. While there is little research on the relationship between mindfulness-based approaches and forgiveness, the writings of Pema Chodron (2007), a Buddhist Nun shed some light on my clients' descriptions. According to Chodron, forgiveness emerges from the sense of acceptance (which for these clients came from practicing mindfulness) because once a person accepts their circumstances then they begin to also accept themselves. Once they learn to accept themselves, they feel a genuine kindness towards themselves and this kindness is then extended to others in the form of empathy, understanding and forgiveness (Chodron & Boucher, 2007). While this explanation is deeply spiritual and spirituality was not a focus of this thesis, it does provide a possible understanding on how the clients reached a state of forgiveness with their tormentors after practicing mindfulness. According to Forsyth and Eifert (2016) once a person lets go of their struggles (e.g., not being able to forgive) then they are able to live their lives

by doing all that matters to them. One client who described that forgiving her tormentors has given her more energy to focus on the opportunities of life in New Zealand, demonstrated Forsyth and Eifert's postulation.

All clients reported benefits from practicing mindfulness both within and outside the counselling sessions. The majority of clients also reported that mindfulness has facilitated a more positive engagement with their emotional reactions, particularly their memories of their lives in the refugee camp. These accounts demonstrate the potency of mindfulness as a proactive coping strategy because these clients reported an ability to reappraise their memories such that they were able to make deeper meanings of them rather than react negatively to them. This phenomenon has been demonstrated through previous research using mindfulness (Gross & Thompson, 2007; Cresswell et al, 2007; Hinterman et al, 2012) where it was demonstrated that practicing mindfulness facilitates a shift in a person's cognitions by changing the way he/she appraises the event. This shift in cognitions in turn facilitates coping behaviour because it reduces the amount of stress and anxiety that the person normally experiences (Luberto et al, 2014; Bergin & Pakenham, 2016). The clients' accounts within my thesis (as presented above) lend support to the evidence of mindfulness as a useful coping method.

While all the accounts discussed above use the words of the participants to indicate a positive influence of mindfulness, there are a few factors that need to be considered alongside them so that the data may be considered objectively. Firstly, there was only a four to five week gap between each participant's final counselling session and his or her follow-up interviews. While this time gap was sufficient for the clients to reflect on the process and practice mindfulness if they wanted to, it was not long enough to determine if this process would actually help the clients cope better when they face another major crisis. None of the clients recalled going through any major life event or emergency post the counselling sessions so it cannot be determined whether the sessions have had any major impact on the clients' coping strategies. Longer periods of follow-up are necessary to establish if the benefits reported by the clients are durable or not (Feeny et al, 2004; Salloum & Overstreet, 2008).

Secondly, we cannot overlook the influence of my dual role as a counsellor and researcher. By the time of the follow-up interview I had developed a relationship with all the clients which could have influenced the kind of feedback they presented me with.

It could be possible that some clients (or maybe all) refrained from giving me any negative comments or reporting any unpleasant side-effects they might have experienced as a result of the sessions for fear of either disappointing me or disrupting my study (this will be discussed in the following chapter). Given that client expectations have been shown to impact the process and outcomes of therapeutic interventions (Seligman et al, 2009; Watsford et al, 2013) these also need to be considered while interpreting my clients' responses. Consistent with findings on young clients' expectations of counselling by Watsford et al (2013) my clients also reported not knowing what to expect from counselling. Some clients had heard of the 'counselling' concept in their schools but had never experienced it prior to volunteering to be clients for my thesis. Some clients also reported forming impressions about counselling from popular media and had expected their sessions to involve 'a lot of crying or lying on a couch'. When they found that this was not being done to them it may have served to add to their comfort during the sessions. It appears then that my clients had neither positive nor negative expectations of counselling but (as set out earlier) decided to attend the sessions out of curiosity. During the follow-up interview the majority of clients described being pleasantly surprised by the process and the comfort with which they began talking about the details of their past and personal lives.

It cannot be definitely concluded that the clients' ways of coping with difficulties and life circumstances have been influenced by the mindfulness-infused counselling sessions, especially in the absence of any reported major event in their lives. However, owing to the qualitative exploration of the clients' experiences of the process it can be inferred that this method of mindfulness infused counselling had some role to play in assisting them to address their concerns with a sense of calmness. It can also be inferred that mindfulness did have some influence on the ways they now perceive and interpret the events that took place in their past. The findings in this section also provide an indication of how young people who have refugee backgrounds respond to Mindfulness based counselling interventions. The implications of these findings are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the data from the counselling services that were offered to the participants as part of this research. The participants are all referred to as 'clients within this chapter and the words ‘researcher’ and ‘counsellor’ are used according to my role in the excerpt being described. The chapter begins with a brief presentation of my notes on the counselling sessions which were written to provide a description of the actual counselling process. The second section presents the accounts of the six participants who completed the follow up interviews. Both sections have been discussed with reference to relevant literature

The final section presents an interpretation of the clients’ accounts of the sessions from both a counsellor’s and a researcher’s perspective. The interpretation has been presented in light of contemporary research. Even though the reports of the clients towards mindfulness-infused counselling are positive, it is preferable that the findings within this chapter be considered as possibilities rather than definitive conclusions about mindfulness or counselling.

Chapter Seven

Convening the findings, literature and implications

Introduction

Creswell (2013) noted that qualitative research does not have a 'tightly prescribed' design but rather its design 'emerges' as the research progresses. This means that the initial plan or other aspects of the research (e.g. data-collection methods) might undergo changes after the researcher enters the field and begins gathering data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Creswell, 2013). My thesis was no exception to this expectation. My research initially was motivated by my own desire to extend my knowledge on the therapeutic use of mindfulness within counselling. After moving to Christchurch and seeing the devastation that the Great Canterbury Earthquakes had caused I felt the need to explore the use of this therapeutic approach with people who were dealing with the after-effects of a natural disaster. Thus, when I set out on my doctoral journey I had the naïve assumption that the former Bhutanese refugees would be traumatised or at the very least still in shock over their experiences in the earthquakes that took place in 2010 and 2011. At that stage, I had intended to offer mindfulness infused counselling sessions as a way for Bhutanese young people to tell their stories and "heal" from the after effects of the earthquakes.

As I began interviewing the participants, however, I observed that even though the earthquakes were a first time experience for them, it was not the main focus of their responses in the interview. Some participants openly admitted that the earthquakes were not the biggest events in their lives. The participants spoke more in-depth about their lives in the refugee camp and particularly about the ways they found 'to make the most of it'. At this stage, it was decided to shift the focus from exploring the "earthquake shock" to instead focus on the coping strategies used by the Bhutanese young people prior to and following their resettlement. The mindfulness-infused counselling sessions were still offered to interested participants but the outcome gains that were explored were now different. Rather than exploring any improvement from the shock and/or trauma of the earthquake, the goal was to explore if any of the participants had

experienced any change in the way they coped with any life events after attending the mindfulness infused counselling sessions.

In this chapter, I will present my findings against existing research and demonstrate the unique contributions that my research makes towards furthering the knowledge on coping strategies of former refugees, the therapeutic usefulness of mindfulness and understanding how resettled refugee youth perceive counselling services. This is followed by a discussion on the implications of my findings for health services and research specifically associated with the lives of former refugees. In the final section I will consider how my findings might be incorporated into therapeutic and community practices that are intended for resettled refugees.

The prominent findings of this research

Social support and coping

"The solidarity of a group provides the strongest protection against terror and despair and the strongest antidote to traumatic experiences" (Herman, 1992 p.214)

Coping in the camps

The above quote best summarises one of the major findings that emerged from the narratives in my research. The first part of the participants' narratives of their lives in the refugee camp (refer to chapter 5) are replete with accounts of horror, abuse and living with meagre resources. The participants recounted the violence they had to face along with constant hardships but at the same time never failed to mention the things that made them happy and helped them deal with their lives in the camp. The first and most important coping factor among all the participants was their close relationships with their families. The second factor that all the participants reported helped them cope was the deep sense of connection among their community and their faith that their people would come to their rescue no matter what.

As mentioned in the findings chapter this element of using friends and community members as a method of coping is a construct that I used to interpret the descriptions of the participants. While I did not adopt a social constructionist approach to analyse the data in my research, I did draw on this approach to understand this theme of 'coping'. Burr (2015) and Woods (1996) encourage using a social constructionist approach to challenge concepts which are 'taken for granted'. Within my research, it was insightful to challenge the assumption about coping among former refugee youth. I used the construct of coping because it was consistent with my knowledge of how people deal with their life circumstances.. Furthermore, I used the word coping within my thesis because the accounts of the participants aligned with what the literature described the concept of coping to be. It is important to note, however, that my participants did not describe their relationships with friends and family as a means of coping but rather as resources that helped them survive circumstances like living in a refugee camp and experiencing the Great Canterbury Earthquakes.

When talking about their resources to survive, most of the participants recounted relying on their friends for support while they lived in the camp. In research about common coping strategies of young refugees and youth in general, reliance on friends for support is frequently mentioned. Rodriguez et al (2003) and Crockett et al, (2007) note that young people are more likely to turn to their friends during unpleasant events because, according to them, friends are more likely to be available and have the information required.

In my research, some participants also mentioned that their friends provided the needed 'distraction' from their hardships. This finding has also been noted in research on refugee youth by Goodman (2004). She demonstrated that doing something to distract oneself was found to be effective by refugee youth because they believed that it kept their mind off their difficulties. The majority of the participants in my research, spoke about the times spent with their friends while recalling prominent memories of their lives in the refugee camp and they also highlighted that it was their friends that 'made it better' for them.

Apart from friends, the participants in my research also recounted relying on their community to cope with life. They talked about a sense of shared experience and how important that was in their ability to survive their time spent in the refugee camp.

Again, this aligns with other research. Goodman (2004) described this sense of shared experience and suggested that it enables refugees to realize that what is happening is not happening to them in isolation. Goodman's (ibid) view was also voiced by my participants, that is, despite the fact that the refugees still have to struggle with their lives, their sense of community encourages them to keep going and not give up,.

While my participants did not explicitly state that they relied on their on their parents to cope with difficulties, many participants acknowledged that their levels of stress were significantly reduced because they did not have to worry about providing for the family. Some participants also acknowledged that they did not have much to worry about since their parents were doing all the worrying on their behalf. This finding was also noted in previous research by Pynoos et al (1999) who observed that children depend on parents for protection. Other researchers such as Prinstein et al (1996) have demonstrated that support from parents plays an important role in reducing stress levels among their children. Furthermore, literature about refugees has indicated that even in traumatic circumstances like war, parents buffer the effects of the bad experiences in their children's lives (Bat-Zion & Levi-Shiff, 1993; Jensen &Shaw, 1993; Macksoud, et al, 1996; Majumder, 2015). These findings indicate that the descriptions narrated to me by young former refugees about their parents' role in buffering them from stress are consistent with literature on the important role parents play in the coping strategies of their children.

Coping Post-Resettlement

Existing literature about refugees after their resettlement has indicated refugee youth face an array of stressors particularly from their schools and families (Lee, 1988; Hyman, 2000). The refugee youth take a long time to adjust to the schools in their new country and this is exacerbated by their lack of English fluency which not only has an impact on their academic performance but also leads them to become socially isolated (Hyman, 2000; Lindencrona, 2008). Refugee youth also experience a cultural conflict because in their schools, they find themselves functioning according to values that are unfamiliar to their parents' culture (Hyman, 2000). Researchers like Huijts et al (2012) have observed that social support is a primary source of coping for resettled refugees.

Similarly, Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2003) have observed that, in addition to their own resources, resettled refugees tend to cope better if they have been provided adequate support services upon their arrival in their host country.

These findings were also observed within the present research. All the participants reported feeling very lonely and isolated post resettlement because they had been separated from their friends. In addition to feeling lonely, some participants also reported feeling guilty over not being able to act as translators for their parents – who had absolutely no English skills. These feelings were particularly prevalent during the Great Canterbury Earthquakes. Since this was the first experience of an earthquake for all the participants, and some had not lived in Christchurch for long when the first earthquake occurred, they were acutely aware of their lack of friends. At the time of the earthquakes most of the participants recounted relying more on their families and members of their ethnic community rather than on friends – primarily because they had been separated from school friends. Some participants lamented that the earthquakes highlighted that their families' decision to resettle had led to the loss of their sense of community that they had shared back in Nepal. On the other hand they did report that the earthquakes gave them and their families the opportunity to reconnect with their community members who were in Christchurch, thus they went through the stress, anxiety and confusion of the earthquake together. For some participants, being around their families and others who their parents had to give shelter to, made them remember their better days in Nepal when they were always surrounded by people who understood them. Moreover, the participants recounted a massive feeling of confusion particularly after the first earthquake in 2010. Being around their community members who were equally confused validated their experience, and as Goodman (2004) described, made them realise that what was happening to them (in this case confusion) was also happening to everyone around them.

Previous research has concluded that family and friends are often the most important sources of social support to young people because they model coping behaviour and help decrease feelings of isolation (Vernberg et al, 1996; Brough et al, 2003; Bal et al, 2003). Other research has indicated that strong emotional support from family and friends has a positive influence on the ability to cope with difficulties (Harding & Looney, 1977; Huang, 1998; Maercker et al, 1999; Haden, 2007). Thus, the findings from my research confirm the findings of these previous studies. One

participant compared the process of the Bhutanese people sharing their post-earthquake stress to carrying heavy luggage – it is made lighter when someone comes and helps you carry it.

Social support and Resilience

As set out in the review of literature, I encountered a challenge while reviewing literature on coping because embedded within that literature were also numerous references to a person's resilience. A deeper review of the literature on resilience revealed that the two concepts have a significant overlap and may occur simultaneously within a person (refer to chapter 3). The conclusion was that, people who are found to be resilient can also be said to be displaying successful coping strategies. But people who are found to cope successfully cannot be assumed to be resilient until the context of their coping has been considered. After carefully considering the theme of coping of my participants I reached the conclusion that resilience was another prominent theme within their narratives.

An interesting observation from the narratives of the Bhutanese young people is that their resilience found expression in the face of their resettlement and subsequently as they experienced a series of major earthquakes for the first time in their lives. There were a few inferences of resilience in the participants' narratives when they talked about their lives in the refugee camp, particularly when they described how they managed to survive with scant resources and how they continued to gather resources from the forest bordering their camp even though it meant risking their lives. But a large part of their resilient factor was uncovered while engaging with their recollections of how they managed after they arrived in New Zealand and in the aftermath of the Great Canterbury earthquakes. In the aftermath of the earthquakes some participants' recounted that they felt like 'giving up' and wished that they could just return to the camps in Nepal. But the important observation was that none of them actually gave up.

After their resettlement they were put in local schools and even though they could not understand what was being taught, they made an attempt to learn and also tried to make new friends. In the aftermath of the earthquakes, all the participants

recounted how they were able to make decisions and take actions to take care of themselves and those around them. They did experience the fear and confusion that the earthquake brought but they were also able to hold their own during this time. Most of the participants' families lost their homes and hence they had to either live with other families or had to leave Christchurch temporarily. But rather than being defeated by these events, all the participants found a way to overcome them and eventually found a way back to their lives. This observation aligns with research on resilience by Flouri et al (2010) who concluded that a person's adaptive responses which comprise their resilient factor are only evident when the person is under a significant amount of stress. All the participants described their experiences of resettlement and the earthquakes as filled with anxiety and stress.

Another prominent observation within this research was the role social and family support played in promoting a person's resilient factor and this was corroborated with the literature on coping (Werner & Smith, 2001; Halcon et al, 2004; Greeff & van der Merwe, 2004; Schweitzer et al, 2007; Pahud, 2008). The majority of the participants recalled that no matter what happened they always knew that their community would be there to support them and bail them out of whatever unfortunate circumstances they had to go through. In the case of the current participants, it would appear that it was from their faith in their community that they derived their motivation to persevere – which resulted in their resilience.

One possible reason that resilience was found to be prominent in the participants' descriptions of their lives after their resettlement could be that they were quite young when they lived in the refugee camp and were (by their own admission) not that stressed about anything because their parents were taking care of and providing for them. The literature on resilience highlights that adolescents and youth who are found to be resilient have had secure relationships with adults and have a strong family and social support system (Bowlby, 1988; Halcon et al, 2004; Schweitzer et al, 2007). Other researchers, for example Wyman (2003) observed that the resilience of young people remains dormant until they are placed in adverse situations. Based, on these findings it can be argued that the resilient factor of the youths who participated in this research had its roots in their childhood spent in the camp but became evident in their later adolescent years when they experienced adverse situations from which their parents could not actively buffer them.

Other researchers have demonstrated that resilience is a 'context-dependent' (Ungar, 2013) phenomenon. Zimmerman and Arunkumar (1994) postulate that resilience is not inborn, nor is it developed but rather comes and goes at different stages of a person's life depending on the circumstances they are in. Within my research it was observed that the participants displayed elements of resilience only in the face of major events in their lives. On the other hand, resilience theorists note that significant risk factors are often present in the lives of people who are inferred to be resilient. Some of the events that the Bhutanese refugees have experienced, such as being made to move countries, or abuse and social disadvantage, are identified in the literature as risk factors for psychological maladjustment (Murray, 2003; Martinez-Torteya et al, 2009). The literature also indicates that resilient individuals have factors that buffer or protect them from stressors. Having a strong social support system has been identified as one of the resources that enable the person to deal effectively with stress (Murray, 2003; Martinez-Torteya et al, 2009) and given that social support was identified within the narratives of my participants' it could mean that they are capable of displaying resilience.

Based on the findings, then, it would seem convenient to categorize the participants of this research as a resilient group and according to the 'western, middle-class constructions' (Kinzie, 2001; Lustig et al, 2004) of coping and mental health, they probably would be. However, Raghallaigh and Gilligan (2009) caution that dichotomizing former refugees as 'resilient' or 'vulnerable' is over-simplistic, because refugees can experience vulnerability and resilience simultaneously. Similarly, in my research, I observed that the participants could be described as vulnerable while they lived in the camps and were dependent on others for their survival but they displayed resilience as adults when they faced a natural disaster. This indicates that they have experienced both.

Nevertheless, when trying to understand the narratives of my participants, I found it useful to note how my participants demonstrated the characteristic of resilience described in the literature as a pro-active quality that evolves from a person's interactions with the environment, the challenges they face, and how they respond to these challenges (Wyman, 2003; Flouri et al, 2010; Ungar 2013). I would therefore, be pragmatic at this stage and state that the theme of resilience was present within the narratives of the participants in this research but I will refrain from categorizing them as a resilient group especially considering the factors described above. I also note that,

the findings of my research align with previous research that has demonstrated resilience to be complex and constantly evolving process (Brandtstadter, 2007; Leipold & Greve, 2009).

Survival and Inner Strength

Another prominent theme within the participants' narratives was their faith in themselves that they would be able to survive even something as devastating as another major earthquake if it were to occur again. Some researchers conceptualize this concept of faith in one's capacities as another facet of resilience and hence refer to it as 'personal resilience' (e.g. Jackson et al, 2007). Other researchers have termed this capacity as 'personal strength' (e.g. Lindsey et al, 2000). The commonality between these two concepts is that they describe the strength that individuals report as coming from 'within themselves' rather than an external source (Wagnild & Collins, 2009). Within my thesis I use the term personal strength because this term appeared to align with the descriptions of my participants, and I will present this in the following section.

A wealth of literature exists that supports the emergence of personal strength among youth (Chapman & Mullis, 2000; Lindsey et al, 2000; Kidd & Davidson, 2007; Stiffman et al, 2007; Bender et al, 2007). However, it should be noted that most (if not all) of this literature has derived its findings from youth who were 'navigating troubled waters' (Lindsey et al, 2000) or in other words were struggling with their marginalized and often extremely challenging circumstances like homelessness, abuse and foster care (Daining & DePanfilis, 2007; Kidd & Davidson, 2007). Thus, the current literature indicates that young people who have experienced challenging circumstances are acutely aware of their personal strengths as compared to young people who have not experienced such circumstances (Lindsey et al, 2000). While no research that explored the concept of personal strength specifically with youth of refugee backgrounds was identified, some research has indicated that adult refugees reported drawing on their 'personal strength' to cope with adversities (Calhoun et al, 1999; Schweitzer et al, 2007; Kim & Lee, 2009). Furthermore, refugees too have come from marginalized backgrounds (Finn, 2010; Donelly et al, 2011) hence the literature discussed below

might aid in the understanding of my participants' descriptions of their personal strength.

Lindsey et al (2000) have observed that youth who come from marginalised backgrounds gave utmost importance to their own resources and personal capacities, which they identified as an internal factor that was significant to them overcoming some obstacle in their lives. Kurtz et al (2000) and Lindsey et al (2000) observed that the dominant internal factor in marginalised youths' ability to develop their personal strengths, was their ability to learn from their personal experiences, because through this they learned to value and accept themselves in new ways. Through their mistakes they also developed their self-confidence and learned to take better care of themselves (Kurtz et al, 2000). This observation was witnessed within my research when one participant described her inner strength, "Just the normal things in life, when you get through them you become stronger. Now I have learned that I can handle anything."

Lindsey et al (2000) found that some youth who have faced difficult circumstances, believe that they have overcome their challenges in life because of the personal attributes they possess. Some of the participants recounted that they 'are strong enough now' and is able to 'find a way through difficulties on their own', these comments align with previous research which observed that young people did not believe that their personal strength was gained through experience but rather believed that these qualities already existed within them and helped them cope with their difficulties (Lindsey et al, 2000; Kidd & Davidson, 2007; Daining & DePanfilis, 2007; Bender et al, 2007).

Another aspect that can be witnessed in the theme of personal strength in my thesis is what Lindsey et al (2000) and Kurtz et al (2000) term as the participants 'learning about themselves' while discovering their personal strength. According to Lindsey et al (2000) one of the benefits of the youth learning about themselves is that they learn to take care of themselves, and they achieve this by channelizing their energy into positive rather than negative directions. There were a number of instances when participants in my research demonstrated their ability to channel potentially negative thoughts into alternate ways of thinking – which helped them cope with the stress caused by the earthquakes and also find ways to take care of themselves. Thus these findings do not necessarily align with Lindsey and Kurtz's findings but they do

facilitate the understanding of how young people can channel their thoughts into a favourable outcome.

This theme of personal strength indicates that these participants are developing some trust in themselves and are prepared to rely on themselves in any future adverse event, rather than solely relying on their families and social networks. It would be convenient to attribute this to their age group because they are on the cusp of adulthood and are transitioning into roles that require them to be aware of their personal strengths so that they can successfully take on 'adult responsibilities' (Zarrett & Eccles, 2006). However, as presented in the review of literature, former refugee youth who have fled their countries have often had to endure many hardships (Fazel et al, 2012). Owing to these circumstances they have had to take on many adult responsibilities much earlier in their lives without really having the opportunity to 'transition' into this role. So rather than being able to successfully navigate 'adult' roles, the value in these former young refugees discovering their inner strength lies in them realising that now 'they can survive anything'.

Mindfulness-infused counselling and coping

As set out earlier in this thesis, all participants were offered up to five mindfulness- infused counselling sessions at no cost. Since coping emerged as the primary focus of my analysis (and ultimately my thesis), the goal of offering the sessions to the participants was to explore whether attending mindfulness-infused counselling had influenced their existing coping strategies. Goodman (2004) advises that refugee youth need opportunities to talk openly and in a safe environment about all that they have been through in order to 'make sense' of or 'heal' from their experiences if needed. The intention of providing mindfulness-infused sessions was to provide one such opportunity to these participants.

As Stedman (1999) and Blackwell (2005) highlighted, the relationship with a counsellor is as important with refugee clients as it is with non-refugee clients. In my research, I endeavoured to develop a good relationship with participants through an introductory meeting, an interview and through mindfulness-infused counselling

sessions. The good relationship was also strengthened by my use of person-centred counselling. This aligns with the findings of Timulak and Lietaer (2001) who note that their clients who were receiving person-centred counselling felt empowered, as they felt that their counsellor was getting them more involved. This is an indication of one of the therapeutic values of person-centred counselling. The lack of recording equipment in my research was also important for the participants as they said it helped them freely talk about what was on their mind.

The clients' reported outcomes of learning and practicing mindfulness have indicated several benefits. These include being able to identify situations which cause them anxiety, feeling more connected with their environment and being able to manage their unpleasant emotional reactions. The majority of the participants reported that practicing mindfulness made them more accepting and less judgmental over the events in their lives. Some have even indicated that they developed the ability to view their current life events without over-reacting to them, while others indicated that they are now actively attempting to deal with the issues that are causing them. The literature describes outcomes similar to these to be proactive coping tools, which emerge from practicing mindfulness (Baer, 2003; Brown et al, 2007; Cresswell et al, 2013; Weinstein et al, 2008; Hinterman et al, 2012). It is tempting, as the researcher, to claim that my findings align with existing research which gives credit to the use of mindfulness in counselling. These findings do help in better understanding the uses of mindfulness in counselling especially since the participant's individual reactions were captured. However, I cannot definitely conclude whether mindfulness-infused counselling results in long-term benefits or merely short-term changes, given that all this data was generated from one interview only.

Bergin and Pakenham (2016) proposed that the practice of mindfulness facilitates a better description of experiences among individuals. Therapeutically this means that clients discuss issues in more depth with their counsellors, and in terms of boosting coping, it has been found that being better able to describe personal circumstances leads to better labelling of feelings and enhances problem-solving skills (Bergin & Pakenham, 2016). Some clients in this thesis commented that they were able to discuss their personal feelings in greater depth for the first time which could be a possible illustration of being better able to describe feelings. But in saying that it must also be acknowledged that all the clients were youth who had a relatively good

command of English and hence were able to verbalize their stories, so it cannot be definitely concluded that the clients' ability to talk about their lives in depth was a result of practicing mindfulness.

Some of the clients indicated that practicing mindfulness even changed the way they dealt with issues that cropped up in their lives and with their families. For example, one client spoke about how mindfulness helped him not stress over accompanying a relative overseas. The client found himself stressing out much less during the journey and even having meaningful conversations with the relative. Bergin and Pakenham (2016) would term this as an enhanced problem-solving capacity as a result of practicing mindfulness but I would have to refrain from making such an arbitrary categorization because my research did not measure this client's problem solving capacities prior to the mindfulness-infused counselling sessions. Rather, my interest was in hearing from participants whether mindfulness changed the way they perceived events in their lives.

Other clients reported, during the follow-up interview, that practicing mindfulness has made them more attuned to their emotions and in some cases, they are able to handle their emotions better even when they are under stress. The literature on the therapeutic use of mindfulness has indicated that its practice facilitates better coping with emotions primarily because mindfulness encourages a person to alter their relationship with their unpleasant emotions rather than avoiding them (Teasdale et al, 2000; Hayes et al 2004; Lappalainen et al, 2007; Chambers et al, 2009, 2015). While on one hand this finding adds to the credilibity of mindfulness as a coping strategy (Khong, 2011; Chambers et al, 2015) these reports need to be treated with caution because, as mentioned earlier the cause and effect realtionship between mindfulness and its outcomes were not explicitly measured and all the reports were introspective accounts of the participants.

Despite the above comments on the limitations I would argue that the findings in this section do contribute to the understanding of the therapeutic influence of mindfulness. The reports from the clients demonstrate how clients (particularly young people) respond to person-centred counselling. The clients who participated in this research indicated that they found this counselling situation helpful in talking about their childhood and even their lives at present. The clients reported that they did not

feel pressured to give particular responses nor did they feel that they were being clinically treated for any condition. These reports indicate the potential of person-centred counselling to be what Barret-Lennard (1998) referred to as a valuable human resource. Furthermore, the findings obtained are from young clients who are former refugees which is the unique contribution made by this research. The findings give an indication of the potential of mindfulness-infused person-centred counselling with former refugees. This warrants further exploration with refugees in their post resettlement period.

Summary of the research findings

In this research former Bhutanese refugees were invited to share their experiences prior to resettlement, the resettlement process and their first experience of a series of earthquakes. The narratives of these participants provided the base for the key findings of this research, the first of which was that even though most of their lives were replete with hardships, they always "found a way to make it better". The relationship that these young people had with their community is a testament to the current literature on the benefits of having a strong social network (Schneider & Ward, 2003; Glover & Parry, 2008). All the participants indicated that it was the presence of their friends and the knowledge that their friends and community members would come to their rescue in an emergency that made their lives in the camp 'worth living'. It was also observed that these young people developed a sense of resilience from their strong sense of community and family support. One of the cardinal lessons they learned in the refugee camp was not to 'give up'. And as one participant said – 'you can't make excuses to get away from life". This comment highlights the element of resilience that these youth had in their lives. Another major theme within the narratives of the Bhutanese youth is their recognition of their 'personal strength' that buffered them against adversities. Some literature postulates that this recognition of inner strength emerges from having a secure base in childhood (Clausen, 1995; Gilligan, 2000). This literature helped inform the theme of personal strength but I also acknowledge that the descriptions of participants in this research do not fully align with the literature because

they have had different backgrounds from those children on whom most developmental theories are based.

Based on the current literature I would argue that these youths' recognition of their personal strength had its genesis in their experience of hardships growing up, and from always having a strong social support system. Three major elements – coping, resilience and recognition of their personal strength are what emerged as the prominent themes among the descriptions of these participants. These findings challenged my initial expectations that these youth would be in a state of shock after the added negative experience of resettlement and the series of earthquakes. On the contrary I observed that participants experienced the shock, horror and sadness of these events but they did not remain stuck in those feelings, but rather 'found a way through it'. With the help of their families and others from their own ethnic community they managed to move past these experiences. When I met with them for the interviews they did not report or appear to be traumatised but rather just spoke about their lives in the camp, resettlement and the Great Canterbury earthquakes as memories.

The accounts of the participants after they attended the mindfulness-infused counselling sessions indicate that they found mindfulness useful as an added strategy for coping. While it cannot be determined that mindfulness would be used during a major life event, because no such event occurred between our final counselling session and the final interview, it is interesting that they mentioned their use of mindfulness to help them negotiate their current life events. In line with claims made by mindfulness researchers, it appears that participants have changed their relationship with their thoughts, beliefs, and feelings (Sharpiro et al, 2006; Brown et al, 2013) as a result of being introduced to mindfulness- infused counselling. Considering these findings and the participants' reports about the uses they derived from this method appears to indicate that mindfulness-infused counselling sessions do have some therapeutic worth (particularly with former refugee youth) and could be explored further.

Acknowledging the Limitations of this research

This thesis used a phenomenological approach to understand the lived coping experiences of former Bhutanese refugee youth while they lived in refugee camps, as they made their resettlement journey to New Zealand and subsequently as they experienced a series of major earthquakes in the city where they were resettled. A phenomenological approach was also used to explore the participants' experiences after they attended mindfulness infused counselling sessions, which were offered to them as part of this research. Raffensperger (2010) noted that without a researcher's candid acknowledgement of the limitations of their research, the findings may be open to misinterpretation by readers. Hence, I am presenting below the limitations of my research in order that I fulfil the task of being a 'good researcher'.

According to van Manen (1990), using a phenomenological approach provides an opportunity for gaining an in-depth understanding of individual experiences. However, one of the criticisms of phenomenology (and qualitative research in general) is that the data are collected from only a few individuals and hence cannot be generalized to a larger population (Anderson, 2010). The aim of this research however was not to make generalizations from the data but to increase the understanding of the lived coping mechanisms of the Bhutanese youth. This was achieved using this appropriate methodology.

Another limitation aimed at qualitative research is that it is subjective rather than objective and highly dependent on the skills of the researcher (Roth & Fonagy, 2005; Anderson, 2010). Others would say that this subjectivity is a strength of qualitative research and is demonstrated by the researcher being candid about how the participants were selected, the methods that were used to generate and analyse the data and by describing other issues that might have influenced the study (Raffensperger, 2010). In my research I demonstrated good qualitative research process by describing, at the outset, all aspects that could have influenced my findings.

The presence of the researcher is another factor that has been highlighted in critiques of qualitative research due to his or her capacity to influence the participants' responses (Anderson, 2010). While this point is valid, it overlooks the capacity of the researcher to revise and/or restructure the interview if it is required. Specifically in my

research I would argue that my presence served a facilitating role with my participants because they were familiar with my presence within the refugee community, I was able to converse in a language they were comfortable with (if needed) and my age was close to theirs. My presence during the follow-up interview might have influenced the type of responses I was given. This was addressed by receiving the responses as they were given but always acknowledging that they might be more positive than intended (refer to previous section).

The interviews and counselling sessions took place over several months with roughly a five-week gap between the final session and the follow up interview. This process provided the opportunity for me and the participants to reflect on the process, which is a natural consequence of this kind of study (Cresswell, 2007). At the same time, I acknowledge that I relied heavily on the participants' ability to recall the events of their life, which as (Heppner et al, 1992) point out, are always 'vulnerable to distortions'. Furthermore, Pahud (2008) observed that former refugees are not used to being asked for their opinions and also have a fear of repercussions for expressing their thoughts. This would imply my participants did not answer all the questions honestly or comprehensively. On the other hand, all the participants were guaranteed complete confidentiality and were also offered an opportunity to read their transcripts and change or alter anything as they deemed appropriate. Therefore, while accepting Pahud's caution, I would also argue that the participants' descriptions within my research are relatively trustworthy.

With regards to the mindfulness-infused counselling sessions it would appear from the participants' comments that it was the perfect intervention. However, researchers like Edge (1999) and Oanes et al (2015) have cautioned that clients are not always honest with their counsellors out of fear of meeting with disapproval. Hence, counsellors and counselling researchers need to always be cautious about how they use and understand feedback from their clients (Oanes et al, 2015). In my thesis it might be helpful to note that the feedback given by the clients may have been different had the follow-up interviews been conducted by a third party who was neutral to the research. But, as discussed earlier in this thesis, this was not possible and during the follow up interview the participants were not asked to evaluate the counselling sessions. Rather they were asked to describe any perceived changes to the ways in which they dealt with life situations. While this does not fully remove the possibility that their answers were

influenced by their desire to please me, it does reduce the pressure for the participants to feel they would disappoint me (as a counsellor) with their comments.

It may be that the decision to not record the counselling session is regarded as a limitation. Indeed, this meant that I had to rely on my reflective counselling notes to recall nuances in the counselling session. I would argue, however, that since the focus in my research was not the content of the sessions but rather the clients' perceptions of the process influencing their ways of coping with life circumstances, this limitation is not relevant to the purpose of the research.

Despite all the drawbacks that are presented above, this research has fulfilled its purpose of addressing the lacuna of knowledge surrounding young resettled refugees' coping strategies in New Zealand and particularly in the aftermath of a natural disaster like an earthquake. The findings also contribute to the understanding of the therapeutic value of person-centred counselling and Mindfulness Based Interventions with youth. My research has succeeded in generating answers about coping, resilience and the use of mindfulness in counselling practices with young former refugees.

Looking to the Horizon – Strengths, Implications and Recommendations

Strengths

The findings of my research have encouraged new ways of perceiving the needs of resettled refugee youth and also have given indications for the use of mindfulness in the counselling with youth of refugee background. In this section I will present the strengths of my research and the implications of my findings for those who work closely with resettled refugees, like counsellors and social workers. I will also present some implications for future researchers who have an interest of working with people of refugee backgrounds. I would however encourage the reader to view these implications in light of the limitations discussed above and not interpret my findings beyond the young people who participated in my research.

According to van Manen (1990), using a phenomenological approach provides an opportunity to gain an 'in-depth' understanding of individual experiences. This was achieved within my research because the approach facilitated some understanding of how the Bhutanese youth perceived their lives in the camp and how they coped with the hardships of life prior to and post-resettlement. As a result of allowing participants to describe their experiences, and using a phenomenological approach to witness these descriptions, an understanding emerged of the development of their resilience, and personal strengths and the methods which help them cope with adversities. It is by listening to the voices of former refugee youth that health professionals and community workers may gain a better understanding of how they deal with the challenges in their lives. For most of the participants this interview was the first opportunity they had to describe and try and make sense of their past experiences so it may be argued that this method has benefits for the participants' as well as the researcher.

Specifically within the New Zealand context, this study was one of the first to gather the experiences exclusively of refugee youth[•]. At the time I began working on my thesis the Bhutanese were the newest refugee community in New Zealand and hence there was very little research available that facilitated an understanding of their strengths, abilities and values. Blackwell (2005) highlights that refugees should not be viewed only in terms of their risks and vulnerabilities. This research has highlighted the strengths that the Bhutanese youth have brought with them and allowed them to describe the processes that enabled them to overcome both the adversities of their resettlement and the after-effects of a natural disaster in their new country.

Implications

The findings that were generated from the mindfulness-infused counselling provide a glimpse of 'what works' for refugee youth and a possibility that might contribute to current knowledge to enhance the adjustment of former refugees to New Zealand (Pahud, 2008, Osman, 2012). Allowing the young former refugees to talk about

[•] this lack of research specifically addressing the needs of resettled refugee youth was highlighted during the UNHCR's community consultation conference held in Auckland (2015)

their experience proved to be the most valuable tool in this research. Based on my findings I would argue that professionals who work with young former refugees need to work out ways to allow the young people to tell their stories before engaging them in any rehabilitative or therapeutic work. These young people might not even be aware of the benefits of talking about their experiences at first but if encouraged to do so, the descriptions they provide could be used to frame their therapy or adjustment interventions in such way that it complements their existing personal strengths and coping capacities.

Another major observation in this research was that former refugee youth needed a safe space, a non-judgmental approach and most importantly a non-patronizing counsellor. The former refugee clients did not ask to be viewed as clients who need to be 'pitied' just because of their past circumstances. Green (2010) and Westergaard (2013) have found similar conclusions while assessing the needs of non-refugee youth clients. This is an important point for consideration among mental health practitioners and social workers whose focus of work is with former refugee youth.

Hodes (2002) and Yakushko et al (2008) suggest that counsellors who work with refugee clients should not be too enthusiastic to only discuss upsetting or unpleasant content. This was also one of the observations made in my research and was, I believe, facilitated by the use of a person-centred approach which allows for the client to choose the direction of their sessions. So an implication that comes from my research is that therapeutic practitioners should not assume that former refugee clients need excessive guidance and direction in their sessions. Allowing the clients to talk at their own pace has the potential to lead to the discovery of elements in their culture and personalities, such as personal strength and coping strategies that may otherwise be overlooked or ignored.

Recommendations

Given the present findings on the positive responses to a Mindfulness Based Intervention future research should definitely focus on advancing the literature base on the use of these interventions with the youth. Burke (2010) has observed that while

there is sufficient support for the feasibility of Mindfulness based interventions with youth there is a lack of empirical evidence of the efficacy of these interventions. My findings suggest that mindfulness-infused counselling appears to help young former refugee clients be calm, become comfortable to opening up to a stranger [therapist], view the past events of their life with a different perspective, find solutions to some problems, and get a grip on their unpleasant emotions. In addition, no client reported any unpleasant side effects as a result of learning and practicing mindfulness. Based on my findings I would recommend those who work with young refugees to incorporate mindfulness practices into their work to facilitate their clients' engagement in the process and potentially achieve the desired outcomes.

Another important implication for practitioners and social workers that emerges from my findings is the need to explore the use of strength-based approaches while working with former refugee youth (Saleeby, 1992; Lindsey et al, 2000). The finding that former refugee youth recognize their own value and inner strength is an important indication that it would be useful when conducting therapeutic work with former refugee youth to first focus on helping them identify their existing strengths and resources. As Lindsey et al (2000) highlight, "rather than viewing these youth as being at risk it is more beneficial to view them as people whose life circumstances have prepared them to survive and eventually thrive". A noteworthy consideration for future researchers which was discovered in my research and also aligns with findings of previous researchers like Blackwell (2005), Pahud (2008) and Osman (2012) is that refugees come to their new host countries with their own strength and resilience, regardless of the circumstances they have been through. In my own research, I had intended to begin by directly discussing the shock of experiencing the earthquakes but it soon became evident that the participants had a long history of dealing with the unknown and my assumption that they would find earthquakes traumatising did not honour their existing capacities to deal with stress. Based on my experience carrying out this research I would recommend that those who work with refugees suspend their own ideas and assumptions about the perspectives of the refugee community in adverse situations and first explore what their views really are.

Finally a recommendation for further research is obtaining more culturally diverse data. My research only captures the perspectives of former Bhutanese refugees. New Zealand hosts refugees from over 55 different countries including Afghanistan,

Ethiopia, Kurdistan, Cambodia and lately, Syria. Studying elements like coping and resilience across different refugee communities would be a noteworthy contribution to New Zealand's data on refugee health, and this would enable policy makers to frame post-resettlement support programs that are both culturally and socially relevant for the refugee groups. Comparing data across various communities is another consideration for future researchers. Given the unique background each refugee community has, resettlement research of this sort would enable community workers to respect the variability of the personal resources of each refugee group. Further, there would be definite value in exploring the experiences of the wider community of resettled refugees from a wider geographical area throughout New Zealand. The need to provide culturally relevant support programs for refugees would require a significant amount of data from which policy makers and government agencies can understand refugee perspectives. This is particularly important at this time with the government considering increasing the number of the annual refugee quota (Kirk, 2016).

Concluding Comments

In my research, I directly engaged with a group of young Bhutanese former refugees and talked about their ways of coping, offered them mindfulness-infused counselling and then tried to understand how they felt this process influenced their ways of coping. I was able to gain and present to my readers a deeper understanding of how the Bhutanese youth find their inner strength, how they face their challenges and how they perceive their past circumstances after attending mindfulness-infused counselling sessions. The unique contribution of this thesis is that it offers insight into the ways the youth who have recently been resettled view their situation. Furthermore, the accounts and interpretations presented within this thesis come from a group of individuals who belong to a community not often represented in New Zealand research. One of the challenges that lie ahead is to attempt similar studies with youth of other ethnicities who have been resettled in New Zealand. This thesis invites researchers to engage with the evaluation of therapeutic interventions with former refugee youth and how these youth perceive these interventions. It was my observation that despite the unique (and admittedly hard) lives of the former refugees their needs within therapy were not

drastically different from non-refugee youth. The findings from my research suggest that former refugee youth have a noteworthy voice, which if listened to, will enhance our understanding of their therapy needs and will facilitate framing the most suitable therapy for them.

Two of the most valuable lessons I have learned from doing this research are that firstly, these former refugees value the support of their families, friends and other people from the community who genuinely attempt to help them; and secondly, they are the experts on their own experiences and needs. I was fortunate enough to be welcomed by eight wonderful people who shared their experiences with me, but this in no way makes me the final authority on those experiences. Hence, I would like to honour that by giving the final word of my thesis to another resettled refugee woman who was not a participant in my research but provided invaluable guidance and advice along the way and who for personal reasons did not want to be identified.

"You know it's kind of weird being a young refugee because no one ever gives you the answers to your questions. Back in the camp our parents are so focussed on keeping us alive that having a deep conversation about life issues does not even come into the picture. Now after coming to New Zealand things have slowly started to make sense, but I know that other young former refugees like me are still figuring things out. If you had asked me all these questions when I was younger, I would not have had the answers but now I do. This is why I really like what you are doing. I like that you are giving our people a chance to talk about their issues and taking their feedback on how the process works for them. After all, there should be nothing about us, without us."

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APPENDIX A

HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Secretary, Lynda Griffioen
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

Ref: HEC 2014/152

8 December 2014

Neville Rodrigues
School of Health Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Neville

The Human Ethics Committee advises that your research proposal "The experiences of Bhutanese youth of refugee background in counselling with mindfulness in the context of the Canterbury earthquakes" has been considered and approved.

Please note that this approval is subject to the incorporation of the amendments you have provided in your email of 4 December 2014.

Best wishes for your project.

Yours sincerely

Lindsey MacDonald
Chair
University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee

APPENDIX B

School of Health Sciences

Telephone: +64 33642987 extn – 3627

Email: neville.rodrigues@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

Date:

The experiences of Bhutanese youth of refugee background in counselling with mindfulness in the context of the Canterbury Earthquakes

Information Sheet for participants

My name is Neville Rodrigues. I have a Master's degree in psychology and am also a trained counsellor. Currently I am doctoral student within the School of Health Sciences at the University of Canterbury. I am undertaking a study as a requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) to understand the resettlement stories and experiences of the Canterbury earthquakes of the Bhutanese youth between the ages of 18 to 24 years. My aim second aim is to study the role of mindfulness techniques in counselling with these youth. The research that I will be conducting will take place in three phases:-

(1) I will offer you an opportunity through interviews to tell your story of resettling in New Zealand and experience during the major earthquakes. I expect that this will take one interview of 90 minutes. If necessary we can schedule a second interview.

(2) Counselling sessions in which you will be introduced to a few mindfulness techniques. You will be offered five sessions each of about 60 minutes.

(3) One final interview that will aim to determine if your coping processes have changed on account of being introduced to mindfulness and counselling. Again this will last no more than 90 minutes

You are invited to participate in this research. The information you share about resettling in New Zealand and your experience of the Canterbury earthquakes will help us to better understand the challenges faced by resettled refugee youth. The information you provide following the counselling sessions will enable us to identify in what ways mindfulness might assist youth affected in future disasters.

If you agree to participate in this study your identity will remain strictly confidential. You will be requested to sign a consent form stating that you are willing to participate in this study, apart from this you do not need to give any other identifying information. You, my supervisors and I will be the only people who will know that you have spoken to me. Please also keep in mind that your participation in this study is voluntary, you can choose to withdraw from the study at any time and without any explanation. Two vouchers each of $25 value will be offered to you in appreciation of your time and travel costs. These will be given to you at the end of each interview.

The interviews and counselling sessions will be scheduled at a time and day which is convenient to you. We will mutually agree on the venue of the interviews but be assured that it will take place at a location where your privacy is respected. You also have the option of bringing along a family member or friend as a support person if you want to. This person may be present during the interviews and counselling sessions.

In the first interview I will ask you to tell me about your life before coming to New Zealand and your experience of resettling in New Zealand. In the second interview I will encourage you to share your experience during the Canterbury earthquakes in as much detail as you like and I will also ask you what factors helped you deal with these events. I will audio record the interviews with your permission as I do not want to miss anything that is said. Before each interview I will also ask you if you would like to be called by your first name or by a fake name during the interview to preserve your identity. If you want a fake name we will choose one for you before the interview and I will call you by that name during our interviews. In any publications resulting from the research your real name will not be used and no identifying information about you will be published.

The counselling sessions that you will be invited to are confidential and hence need to take place in a secure location. You will be invited to the School of Health Sciences at the University of Canterbury for these sessions. There will be no recording during these sessions. During these sessions you will be given an opportunity to talk about anything of your choice. The benefit of this process is that it will give you a chance to view whatever you tell me in a different way. My role during these sessions will be to support you, encourage you and respect everything that you tell me.

At the counselling sessions we will also spend a few minutes at the beginning and at the end of the session practising mindfulness. Mindfulness is a form of meditation where you will be guided and encouraged to become aware of your mind and body with the purpose of experiencing them clearly and without distraction.

The final interview will take place about three to five weeks after your final counselling session. In this interview I want to discuss any changes to your methods of coping following the mindfulness and counselling process.

There are no known physical risks to you as a participant. However, we may be talking about some difficult experiences in your life and these might cause you to feel sad, stressed or anxious. If some questions are particularly stressful to you then you are free not to answer them. If you wish to stop the interview you may do so at any time. Alternatively, if you choose to continue with the interview but don't want to talk about certain things, that is also okay. You will also be given the contact details for a counselling service in case at any time you wish to speak with another counsellor. This service is free for you.

Please be aware that my supervisors and I are the only ones who will have access to the recordings of the interviews and the transcripts of the interview.

When you come in for counselling I will ask you to tell me how you are feeling and if you find anything different since the last session and I will note this down. After the counselling session I will write down my thoughts on the process but I will not be identifying you in these notes. These notes will be kept securely and will be discussed with my supervisors only; they will also be used as part of the research. All recordings and notes from the interviews and the reflective notes I write about the sessions will be stored in a safe and lockable place at the University for the duration of my study; all digital material will be stored on a password protected computer. On completion of my study all of this will be destroyed.

If you want to receive a copy of the results of the study you may indicate this to me at our final meeting and the results will be sent to you as soon as possible. You will also be given the opportunity to check the transcripts of your interviews and make any changes if you wish.

I will be pleased to discuss any questions and concerns you may have about participating in this project. I may be contacted privately on the phone number or the email address mentioned above. If I do not answer your call please leave me a message and I will get back to you or you may try to call me again.

I invite you to let me know your decision about participating in my study. Alternatively I will contact you after about 10 days to check on your decision. If you decide that you do not want to participate I will respect that and there will be no penalties to you.

My project is being carried out under the supervision of Associate Professor Judi Miller who can be contacted at judi.miller@canterbury.ac.nz or 03-364-2987 extn - 6546; and Dr. Sarah Lovell who can be contacted at sarah.lovell@canterbury.ac.nz or 03-364-2987 extn - 44062. They will be pleased to answer any queries you may have pertaining to this study.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury's Human Ethics Committee (HEC) and any complaints should be addressed to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

Neville Rodrigues

APPENDIX C

School of Health Sciences

Telephone: +64 33642987 extn – 3627

Email: neville.rodrigues@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

Date:

The experiences of Bhutanese youth of refugee background in counselling with mindfulness in the context of the Canterbury Earthquakes

Information Sheet for community leader

Thank you for your interest in referring participants to my study. I am undertaking this study as a requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) to understand the means by which Bhutanese youth in Christchurch cope with a natural disaster and the benefits mindfulness techniques in counselling may offer them all in the context of the aftermath of the Canterbury earthquakes. It is one of my aims in this study to understand the resettlement stories and experiences of the Canterbury earthquakes of the Bhutanese youth between the ages of 18 to 24 years. My second aim in this study is to offer counselling with mindfulness techniques to these youth and then assess to what extent it had any effect on their lives. It is my overall endeavour to use the findings from this study to be better prepared to assist the emotional and psychological needs of the youth in the face of future disasters.

The research that I will be conducting will take place in three phases:-

(1) Interviews which will allow the youth an opportunity to tell their story of resettling in New Zealand and their experience during the major earthquakes. I expect that this will take one interview of 90 minutes. A second interview may be scheduled if required.

(2) Counselling sessions in which mindfulness techniques will be introduced to the youth (individually) and they will be encouraged to discuss any concerns they have or anything that is causing them distress.

(3) A final interview that will aim to determine if the coping processes of the youth have changes on account of being introduced to mindfulness and counselling.

For my research I am inviting young Bhutanese men and women who are:

A – Between 18 to 24 years of age

B – Unmarried

C – Not suffering from any intellectual disability

D – Self-Identify as being a Lhotshampa

E – Able to communicate without the help of an interpreter

F – Resettled in Christchurch prior to the first major earthquake in September 2010

G – Not currently receiving any form of counselling services

In order to conduct my study I need your help as the leader of the Bhutanese community in Christchurch to refer suitable youth to the study. If you consent to helping me in this referral process I would require you to:

1 - Decide how many youth in your community meet the conditions specified above

2 – Briefly explain my study and the service being offered to them and gain their permission to refer them to me

3 – Introduce me to the youth of your community (possibly during a communal gathering)

Once you have referred the youth to me I will not be allowed to discuss with you any matter which they raise during the research process with you. Even the choice of the youth to participate in this study has to be their own and hence I am not allowed to report to you when they meet with me. This practice will be followed strictly on account of privacy and confidentiality reasons.

I will be pleased to discuss any concerns or any questions you may have about this project. I may be contacted on the private phone number or the email address mentioned above. If I do not answer please leave me a message and I will get back to you or you may try to call me again after some time.

My project is being carried out under the supervision of Associate Professor Judi Miller who can be contacted at judi.miller@canterbury.ac.nz or 03-364-2987 extn - 6546; and Dr. Sarah Lovell who can be contacted at sarah.lovell@canterbury.ac.nz or 03-364-2987 extn - 44062. They will be pleased to answer any queries you may have pertaining to this study.

My project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury's Human Ethics Committee (HEC) and any complaints should be addressed to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

Neville Rodrigues

APPENDIX D

School of Health Sciences

Telephone: +64 33642987 extn – 3627

Email: neville.rodrigues@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

Date:

Letter to refugee community leader

_____

_____

Christchurch

Dear _____

My name is Neville Rodrigues and I am a doctoral student within the school of health sciences at the University of Canterbury. I have a Master's degree in Psychology obtained from the University of Pune, India and I am also a trained counsellor. I am undertaking a study as a requirement for my PhD to understand the resettlement stories of former Bhutanese refugee youth and the benefits of mindfulness techniques in counselling for these youth in the context of the aftermath of the Canterbury earthquakes.

In the first phase of my study I want to understand in depth, the mechanisms used by the Bhutanese youth to cope with a natural disaster like an earthquake. In the second phase I will offer counselling with mindfulness techniques to the youth who are interested and then determine to what extent they found it useful. It is my overall goal to use the findings from this study to improve understanding of the needs of youth of refugee backgrounds in the field of counselling in order to be better prepared to assist the emotional and psychological needs of the youth in the face of future disasters.

I am writing to you because the youth I am inviting to participate in my study are those belonging to your 'Lhotshampa' community and I wish to recruit them through your

assistance. For my study I wish to speak with some of the youth to try and understand their ways of coping with an earthquake after being resettled in a third country. I also wish to offer my services as a counsellor to these young people and provide them an opportunity to discuss matters of concern in a safe and accepting environment.

I would like at this point just to clarify what I mean by counselling, it is a process where I will listen to my clients without judging them and also give them time to talk, cry, shout or just think. The benefit of counselling is that it is an opportunity for people to look at their concerns in a different way in the supportive presence of someone who will encourage and respect their opinions and choices. The process of counselling is also strictly confidential which means that I will not be discussing anything from the counselling sessions publicly. The only people I can discuss my sessions with are my supervisors and even then it is done confidentially and without identifying my clients.

I have also mentioned earlier that I want to introduce mindfulness techniques in the process of counselling. Mindfulness is a form of meditation where the person is guided and encouraged to become aware of their mind and body. The purpose of this practice is to focus attention onto our body and thoughts and thus be able to experience them with clarity. It can be practiced by anyone and at any time and does not require any equipment or special clothing and does not involve consuming any substance. It is also not a religious practice.

It is my desire to have the youth recruited through you as I mentioned that this is a process that emphasizes respect and it goes without saying that as their leader you have their respect. I think it important for them to hear about my study and the process of it for the first time from a source that they trust. I also want you to understand that the recruitment of youth is voluntary which means that they can choose to participate in my research or not. I am also going to attach another sheet giving you finer details of my study and the criteria the youth have to meet (like age limit) to be a part of my study. I will accept into my study the first 12 youth who give consent to being referred to my study.

The format of the work that I propose to do with the youth is as follows:

- First make formal contact with the youth who have indicated that they want to be part of my study
- Explain my study to them both verbally and in written form and inform them of what will be involved in their participation
- Obtain their consent and schedule a convenient time to conduct the interviews
- Conduct the interviews and counselling sessions in a place of their choosing (but which still affords privacy)
- Invite the youth for one final interview
- Provide the results of my study after it has been completed

I thank you for taking the time to read this letter. If you consent to becoming involved in referring the youth or if you have any questions regarding my study please feel free to contact me on the private phone number or the addresses given above.

Yours Sincerely

Neville Rodrigues

APPENDIX E

School of Health Sciences

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Date:

CONSENT FORM

The experiences of Bhutanese youth of refugee background in counselling with mindfulness in the context of the Canterbury Earthquakes

I have read and understood the information sheet and have also been given the opportunity to ask any questions to the researcher

I agree to be a participant in this study and to have my interviews audio recorded

I understand that when I am in the counselling sessions there will be no recording in any form. The only materials from the session that will be recorded are my responses to the pre-session question and the counsellor's reflections of the session.

I understand that matters discussed in my interviews and counselling sessions will be kept confidential and in any publications of the study there will be no information that identifies me in any way.

I understand that I will be given an opportunity to read the transcripts of my interviews and make any changes if I wish.

I understand that all notes of my interviews and counselling sessions and my recordings will be accessed by the researcher and the supervisors only and that these will be stored in a safe and lockable place at the University of Canterbury. All electronic copies of the notes will be stored securely on the University server.

I understand that this data will be stored for 10 years. After that it will be destroyed.

I understand that the only other persons who might have access to the interview recordings and counselling notes are the researcher's supervisors.

I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time and without explanation and there will be no penalty to me. In the event that I withdraw the researcher will make every effort to remove any information that I have provided.

I understand that this consent form will be kept in a lockable cabinet and separate from any interview material so that I cannot be identified.

I understand that at the end of the study I can receive a report of the findings.

If I have any queries or concerns regarding the study at any point I may contact the researcher or any of the supervisors whose contact details have been provided in the attached information sheet.

By signing below, I indicate that I have understood the research and I am agreeing to participate.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Please return this completed consent form to the researcher

APPENDIX F

Topics for Interview

The following interview will be adopting a narrative approach and hence the topics listed below serve more as prompts. It is expected that the following sorts of topics will be covered in the interviews. The researcher will continually reflect on the responses of the initial interview so that subsequent interview topics can be revised.

- Interview 1

1. The experience of being born and raised in a refugee camp
2. The experience of living in the refugee camp in Nepal
3. The things that helped you cope with life in the refugee camp
4. The experience of preparing to be resettled
5. The experience of leaving the camp for a third country
6. The story of living in and getting used to Christchurch
7. Particular things that caused worry before coming and after reaching New Zealand
8. Some prominent issues that they faced immediately on arrival
9. The things that you did to cope as you settled in a new country
10. Experiences they have had here in Christchurch that stand out

- Interview 2

1. The experience during and after the September 2010 earthquake
2. The reality of being in a new country and having to face the earthquake
3. The experiences during the earthquake of February 2011
4. The things that helped you cope during the earthquakes
5. Getting help and assistance after the earthquake
6. The type of support (if any) that was received after the earthquakes
7. The kind of things they do when they are tensed, sad or upset
8. Any experiences that stands out during any subsequent shaking/aftershock
9. The things that helped you cope with the stress after the earthquakes
10. Anything in particular that was found to be helpful to get them through this difficult time

- Interview 3

1. So in our first interview we spoke about your life events and you also told me about the things that are important to you and how you deal with situations that cause you stress or trouble you. So at this interview could you tell me if you perceive any differences in how you deal with stressful situations/challenges today as compared to before you joined this research?

2. Has learning mindfulness changed the way you perceive your life situations today? *(conditional to the response elicited by first question)*
3. So when you were first invited to some counselling sessions, what did you think it was going to be like? Were the sessions you attended what you thought they would be? If no, how were they different from what you thought?
4. Can you think of a stressful situation(s) you have dealt with in the last few weeks? If you can, tell me what made that situation difficult and how you dealt with it.
5. How do you make sense of your past today? (context to be provided to each participant for this question)
6. Did you practice mindfulness on your own since you learned it? Was either mindfulness or counselling (or both) of any use to you? Why do you think so?
7. Has your cultural background influenced the meaning you give to the mindfulness and counselling sessions you have undergone?
8. Are there any additional reflections or comments you would like to make about your experience with counselling or mindfulness?

APPENDIX G

Example of a phenomenological line-by-line analysis

N – Can you tell me a bit about that feeling? What is it like?

S – That feeling.. it's just like ummm how can I even explain? [giggles]

N – However you like trying to be encouraging.

S – it's like why do we even have to go through this.. just WHY???? We had such a hard life and stuff and then what's more left to happen? Can't we just have a break? Why do we even have to....?? It stops you from pretty much everything.. you just get that fear and then and it just like stays there and then.. it doesn't feel good

↳ Lines 1-4 — reveal her existential tussle after having to go through the earthquakes. Her exasperation and fatigue at always having a tough life are seen. Her biggest cryout is that everything that happens to her, somehow finds a way into her heart and stays with her. She finds it hard to let go.

N – I'm sure it doesn't.. do you remember if you guys got any support or any help after the earthquakes?

S – oh yes.. so it was from the heart foundation because my sister has a heart condition and they sponsored us to go to Auckland and stuff and that's how we went there.. Yeah so they helped us out

↳ Lines 1-3 — shows her indicating the agencies that helped her family out when they were in need post the earthquakes.

N – and in these couple of years because I think the last major aftershock was in 2012 [S – umm hmm] do you remember any incident in your life or anything else related to the earthquakes? Anything that you remember?

S – ummm no just that I guess.. I'm not really sure [chuckles]

↳ Possibly too vague a question to illicit a detailed response from such a young one . . .

✳ N – oh that's alright.. you've even told me about the fear you've had in school about the kids making fun and stuff so..

APPENDIX H

Example of a mindfulness transcript obtained from marc.ucla.org©

Breathing Meditation (5:31)

- Find a relaxed, comfortable position
- Seated on a chair or on the floor, on a cushion
- Keep your back upright, but not too tight
- Hands resting wherever they're comfortable
- Tongue on the roof of your mouth or wherever it's comfortable.
- And you can notice your body
- From the inside
- Noticing the shape of your body, the weight, touch
- And let yourself relax
- And become curious about your body
- Seated here
- The sensations of your body
- The touch
- The connection with the floor

- The chair
- Relax any areas of tightness or tension
- Just breathe
- Soften
- And now begin to tune into your breath
- In your body
- Feeling the natural flow of breath
- Don't need to do anything to your breath
- Not long not short just natural
- And notice where you feel your breath in your body
- It might be in your abdomen
- It may be in your chest or throat
- Or in your nostrils
- See if you can feel the sensations of breath
- One breath at a time
- When one breath ends, the next breath begins
- Now as you do this you might notice that your mind might start to wander
- You might start thinking about other things
- If this happens this is not a problem
- It's very natural

- Just notice that your mind has wandered
- You can say "thinking" or "wandering" in your head softly
- And then gently redirect your attention right back to the breathing
- So we'll stay with this for some time in silence
- Just a short time
- Noticing our breath
- From time to time getting lost in thought and returning to our breath
- See if you can be really kind to yourself in the process
- And once again you can notice your body, your whole body, seated here
- Let yourself relax even more deeply
- And then offer yourself some appreciation
- For doing this practice today. Whatever that means to you
- Finding a sense of ease and wellbeing for yourself and this day
- [bell rings]©